George Fitzhugh:

Propagandist of the Old South

By

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Gloucester, Mass.

PETER SMITH

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GEORGE FITZHUGH

Photograph taken in 1855 just before the Fitzhugh-Wendell Phillips debate at New Haven

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TO

ISAAC JOSLYN COX

AND

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

INSPIRING TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS

PREFACE

I first came to appreciate the significance of George Fitzhugh about a decade ago while a graduate student of the late William E. Dodd at the University of Chicago. Professor Dodd, in his informal conversations—they were scarcely lectures—dwelt upon the revolutionary influence of the proslavery school, especially of Fitzhugh and his followers, in altering the mind of the ante-bellum South. Further study of Fitzhugh ultimately convinced me that here was no ordinary slavery propagandist, but a challenging observer of his milieu who conceived of a national issue in terms of a world historical setting, reviving the timeless human problem of freedom versus organization, of liberty versus order, and of experimentalism versus authority. Fitzhugh sought intellectual sanctions for slavery in an historical analysis which suggested to him that all social organizations have ever been from necessity slavery in a more or less overt form until the coming of modern liberalism.

Professing a deep contempt and impatience with the dialectics of liberalism, he insisted that the social nature of man, his dependence upon group forms and associations to escape extermination, made slavery almost a group instinct. He stigmatized freedom as a modern hoax perpetrated through the self-interest of the rising middle-classes who desired to evade the restraints of feudalism and were confident that a laissez-faire system would insure the ascendancy of business and professional leadership. Fitzhugh, like the Socialists, wrote that this new liberalism with its capitalistic rules of competition contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction. When its doom should be fulfilled he wished to see the universal paternalism of an

ordered society—"slavery"—succeed as the only practical alternative to world-wide communism. The question of Negro slavery, he often repeated, was but incidental to a much broader societal conception. The world must choose between the security of the feudal ideal and the chaos of liberalism—such was the alternative he offered. Lincoln, before writing his famous "house-divided" speech, was to ponder long over Fitzhugh's words in *Sociology for the South,* "One set of ideas will govern and control after awhile the civilized world. Slavery will every where be abolished, or every where be re-instituted."

Fitzhugh's weaknesses were obviously those of the "either-or" philosopher who recognizes no fine intermediary distinctions between two destructive extremes. In his attempts to crush the first tentative steps of nineteenth century liberalism, he definitely allied himself with the European forces of conservative reaction. However much his own native kindliness would have compelled him to stop short of the modern implications of his thought, there is little doubt that his "system" belongs within the ideological orbit of contemporary Fascism. From Fitzhugh to Mussolini the step is startlingly brief.

Like many students of the South I am indebted to my former teacher, Professor Avery O. Craven, whose ingenious application of the "Turner theories" to the South has given a fresh perspective to the subject and inspired caution in the use of that heterogeneous term—the "South." I have profited directly from the fruitful suggestions of the distinguished anthropologist, Professor Melville J. Herskovits of Northwestern University, whose seminar on the Negro in America was the immediate starting point of this study, especially in relating the Old World background to the South. Above all, I must acknowledge the inspiration of Professor Isaac Joslyn Cox of Northwestern who has been more intimately associated with whatever progress I may have made than perhaps any other individual.

My colleagues and the administration of De Paul University have generously given such assistance to me as almost to lend the character of a co-operative work to this biography. Professor Charles P. O'Donnell, Chairman of the Political Science Department, has given the manuscript the benefit of his brilliant insight and extensive knowledge of American political theory. I must acknowledge the assistance, in reading the various chapters, of Professors Cecil B. Williams, Cyril O'Donnell, Leo Shapiro, Arthur J. Schaefer, and Wallace P. Mors. My assistants, Miss Sara Lurie and Mr. John Cerny, performed yeoman service in preparing this manuscript for the press.

The extent of my indebtedness to various libraries and particular individuals can be surmised from my bibliographic note. Finally, there are the inevitable acknowledgments to those amazing individuals, the editors of this series, Professors Wendell H. Stephenson and Fred C. Cole, to whom the arduous preparation of this volume for publication was but another chore in their very busy life.

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Chapter I

THE FITZHUGHS OF TIDEWATER VIRGINIA

WHILE the relentless sweep of the westward movement during the Presidential term of Thomas Jefferson brought with it new commonwealths imbued with a frontier spirit, eastern Virginia could look back upon its two centuries of history. The steady stream of immigration which once had created the Old Dominion was now deflected southwestward in increasing force as the virgin lands of the deep South welcomed the pioneer. After the 1820's only the unimaginative tidewater Virginian could fail to perceive that an entire cycle of social growth had been ended despite the fact that Virginia remained, as ever, overwhelmingly rural, a society of small independent farmers. However persistently frontier traits might linger along the old tidewater valleys which had once greeted the eager immigrant of Stuart times, the optimistic frontier note of democratic opportunity had moved westward.

"Expand or die!" Such appeared to be the inner necessity of the American expansionist spirit. Let aging Virginia cling to its nostalgic memories and stirring traditions of a gallant age, concealing her inadequacy before the vibrant strength of the West. The Virginia Dynasty at the nation's capital was soon to yield the reins of power to the political leaders of regions which had been the Indian's hunting grounds in Washington's day. As the tobacco industry continued to suffer the economic depression of pre-Revolutionary times, and the precarious grain trade bolstered by

Europe's war necessities found newer channels elsewhere, the heavy tidewater river traffic of a previous age began to decline. Large tobacco warehouses, overflowing in more prosperous years, remained partially empty and wharves along the Potomac, the Rappahannock, and the James rivers were permitted to wear away unrepaired against the force of the current. The frontier era of soil-butchery had left its mark. John Taylor of Caroline, famous Jeffersonian Republican, pleaded with his tidewater neighbors in 1814 not to yield to the fatalistic belief that Virginia's soil was exhausted. Scientific cultivation, he insisted, could save the older agrarian way of life with its color and openhandedness against the coming of economic man and his calculating psychology.[1]

Westerners were amused by Virginia's antiquarian interests in its "first families," pointing out that intermarriage among tidewater folk had gone on for so long that distinguished ancestry had become the common boast of many a deflated aristocrat and rural squire. As piedmont Virginia, under the penetration of tidewater families and slavery, became socially assimilated to the settled eastern counties during the early Federal period, a common front against the plebeian German and Scotch-Irish of the Northwest was sought in terms of a romantic ideal. "The *second* families have intermarried with the *first* to such an extent," declared the Fredericksburg (Va.) *News* in 1852, "that the leaven of aristocracy has been diffused in the whole mass, and thereby all have become double F V's [First Families of Virginia]." The editor, Robert Baylor Semple, went on to philosophize:

> Aristocracy is the product of all old settled communities. . . . It is as applicable to public sentiment as to governments. The few can as effectually control by this great moral lever as

[1] John Taylor, *Arator* (Columbia, S.C., 1814), 11–13; Avery O. Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606–1860* (Urbana, Ill., 1926), *passim*.

through the power of the law. And what may seem strange to the ear of democracy, that society is often the best which is governed by such an influence.[2]

Walter Scott's romantic medieval tales found an exceptionally sympathetic response in the hearts of eastern Virginians, for the knightly names of Norman and Angevin times were embalmed in the historic family seats of the Old Dominion: Marmion, Ravensworth, Stafford, and Fairfax were redolent of the Waverley novels as they were of Virginia's colonial history. The popularity of Scott lay in the glorious retrospective glow he cast upon the lost past, compensating for the prosaic realities of a more commercial age.

Few family names were as suggestive of ancient renown as that of the Fitzhughs of Virginia whose genealogies fill countless pages of research done by a band of diligent antiquarians. The Fitzhughs, once known as Bardolphs, were of old Danish stock in Britain when William the Conqueror invaded the Isle.[3] In English history, as their descendants were fully aware, they had been signers of Magna Carta, leading supporters of the Lancastrians in the War of the Roses, and had furnished eminent bishops, soldiers, and courtiers.

The family's story in America begins in 1671 when William Fitzhugh of Bedfordshire, lawyer, planter, and statesman, emigrated to Virginia and settled at Eagle's Nest on the Potomac in Stafford County (later comprised in King George County); in 1673 he married Sarah Tucker of Westmoreland. His affairs flourished like the proverbial green bay tree; he received grants of 96,000 acres of land in the Northern Neck of Virginia. Ultimately, five sons inherited 54,954 acres of land in King George, Fairfax, and

2 Fredericksburg (Va.) *News*, July 12, 1852.

3 Genealogy, based partly upon the records of the British Museum, furnished by Fitzhugh's granddaughter, Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith, Montgomery, Ala., September 9, 1939.

Stafford counties, constituting the family seats built by William for his sons according to Virginia custom: Boscobel and Belair in Stafford and Chatham near Fredericksburg, Ravensworth in Fairfax County, and Bedford in King George County, as well as Eagle's Nest, the original estate.[4]

George Fitzhugh of Port Royal possessed creditable pretensions as a local historian of note. One of the first to study his ancestor's manuscripts, he found William Fitzhugh, his first Virginia forbear, too much the Tory gentleman in some respects, even for his conservative tastes; he disliked particularly William's strong ties to the British court. On the other hand, he admired the leisure-class ideals of his ancestor, the recognition of a natural stratified society dominated by the *noblesse oblige* attitude of the planter-aristocrat. William sought to make the sheriff's office an entailed perquisite in his family after feudal custom, finding a precedent in English and Scottish society. In those colonial days of few Negro slaves but thousands of "ignorant and criminal" indentured white servants, ever ripe to heed the incendiary's call to insurrection against their masters, there was little opportunity for democratic notions. "Indeed," wrote George, "Fitzhugh thought that the *plebs,* the rabble, the *sans culottes,* the *mobilium turba quiritium,* were only made to be taxed and whipped." Ever with an eye upon Negro slavery of his own day, George Fitzhugh could conclude with his own estimate of indentured servants which he attributed to his famous ancestor:

> Accustomed to be whipped and branded on the cheek by their masters, they knew not how to govern themselves when set free from the control of those masters. Demagogues like Parson

[4] "The Fitzhughs," in Fredericksburg *News,* January 15, 1872; Moncure D. Conway, *Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* (New York, 1892), 197–205; Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (San Marino, Calif., 1940), 155–86.

Waugh easily deceived them, and excited them to attempt insurrection.[5]

This William Fitzhugh, "a fair classical scholar, a learned, able, and industrious lawyer, a high tory, high Churchman," and a follower of Governor Berkeley in Bacon's Rebellion, remained an ideal in George Fitzhugh's mind. But as a successful businessman with important European and American commercial connections, and as Lord Fairfax's land agent, William Fitzhugh belonged to the rising capitalist class which his descendant could never comprehend save with distaste.[6] Seldom has the urban-commercial spirit and the agrarian life been so successfully blended as in the days of the great commercial companies of colonial America. The writings of Jefferson and John Taylor of Caroline, both Virginia planters, in their outspoken anti-capitalist bias, testify to the subsequent cleavage of both social systems.

The Virginia Fitzhughs, sharing the large birthrate of the tidewater gentry, multiplied exceedingly, much to the distress of subsequent genealogists. One branch of the family, descending from the prominent Masons of Gunston, emigrated to Maryland and then to New York and, through an ironic twist of fate, intermarried with two of the most active abolitionists in the Union. Ann Carroll, daughter of Dr. William Fitzhugh of Livingston County, New York, and born in Hagerstown, Maryland, married Gerrit Smith in 1822.[7] Another member of this Fitzhugh branch married James G. Birney, the famous abolitionist candidate for president. George Fitzhugh, who later became intimate

[5] George Fitzhugh, "Chotank, Alexandria—A Dive into Herculaneum," in *De Bow's Review* (New Orleans), XXX (1861), 89. The aristocratic social order of the Old Dominion is well treated in William E. Dodd, *The Old South: Struggles for Democracy* (New York, 1937).

[6] George Fitzhugh, "The Northern Neck of Virginia," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVII (1859), 289.

[7] Octavius B. Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith* (New York, 1879), 27.

with these distant relatives despite his opposition to abolition, always contended generously that the Fitzhugh maids had "married well."

Colonel William Fitzhugh of Revolutionary times, whom Fitzhugh claimed as an ancestor, proved his patriotism during the War of Independence by surrendering his commission in the British army rather than fight against America, a decision which meant his military imprisonment. Other Fitzhughs, as is apparent from even a cursory examination of state history, occupied high positions in the colonial and state councils, and according to the Washington *Herald* "were universally esteemed for their talent, probity, and high morality."

However ready George Fitzhugh might be to discuss his ancestors and collateral relatives, he wrote only in the most fragmentary fashion about his own immediate family. Possibly some of this was due to an early background of straitened circumstances. He was born on November 4, 1806, in a rural community near Brentsville called Brent Town Tract, in Prince William County, of Dr. George Fitzhugh and Lucy Stuart of Mount Stuart.[8] There appears to have been another son, R. K. Fitzhugh, born in 1816, who eventually left for Augusta, Woodruff County, Arkansas, and died on March 23, 1888; but little more is known.[9] Lucy Stuart was a sister of a prominent Virginia soldier, Colonel John Stuart. Her husband, son of John Fitzhugh and Alice Thornton, was born in 1776 and died at the age of forty-eight when George was eighteen years old.

The family, after leaving this home about 1812, always referred to their former habitat as "the backwoods." Newspapers and letters were often cut off during severe winters when the community along the Potomac and inland was icebound, a life not wholly different from that of Whittier's

[8] Fitzhugh's grandson, Marcellus E. Foster, editor emeritus of the Houston *Press* (Scripps-Howard), to the author, September 5, 1938.

[9] *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Richmond), IX (1902), 102.

New England. Like the rest of the Northern Neck of Virginia, this area, once easily accessible in colonial times, was becoming increasingly inaccessible as the routes of commerce forsook the multitude of rivers for inland pathways and, later, railways.

Dr. George Fitzhugh, who served as an army surgeon during the War of 1812, owned a moderate-sized plantation, Bellmount, King George County, of some four or five hundred acres, presumably tilled by slaves.[10] There were only intermittent bursts of prosperity, however, and several years after his death at the beginning of the agricultural depression of 1825, the estate was sold for cash at a trustee's auction.

King George County, like neighboring Prince William and a half dozen other counties between the Potomac and the Rappahannock, presented a dark picture of economic decline, or at best a stationary situation during most of the ante-bellum era when population in the newer counties was advancing by leaps and bounds. Prince William, for example, is typical of the Northern Neck of tidewater Virginia in its steady decline of both white and slave population. In 1800 Prince William had had 6,975 whites, 5,416 slaves, and 342 free Negroes; twenty years later there were 4,736 whites, 4,380 slaves, and 303 free Negroes.[11] The downward trend of population for King George County was marked by a greater proportion of Negroes in evidence in an approximate ratio of three to two of blacks to whites.

When the Fitzhughs first came to King George County, a stabilizing trend was becoming evident, since the white population of 2,381 for 1810 declined only to 2,349 by 1820; similarly the number of slaves decreased from 3,876

10 Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald,* July 18, 1829. This contains a copy of the trust sale of the Fitzhugh estate. Thomas K. Skinker, *Samuel Skinker and His Descendants* (St. Louis, 1923), 179.

11 *Fifth Census of the United States, 1830, Population* (Washington, 1832). The number of free Negroes in Prince William County rose to 552 in 1850. *Ibid., 1850.*

to 3,504 during that period. At the time that George Fitzhugh finally left his home in 1829 the county population had begun to rise, although by a modest proportion. Only the free Negroes, here as elsewhere in the state, enjoyed a steady growth in numbers, rising from 86 in 1790 to 287 in 1830, due in part to private acts of emancipation.[12] One branch of the Fitzhugh family in fact, the wealthy Fitzhughs of Chatham with whom George was on intimate terms, manumitted their two hundred slaves during this period. Jeffersonian liberalism conspired with other causes, such as the decreasing local value of slave labor, to favor emancipation.

The new home of the Fitzhughs in King George County was located in the Chotank area, situated on a small creek of that name flowing into the Potomac River near Alexandria. Like the Brent Town Tract, which had originally been intended as a refuge for persecuted Huguenots, it too possessed a large element descended from this ambitious French stock. George Fitzhugh, who became an historian of the Rappahannock Valley, usually stressed in his writings the coming of the aristocratic English cavaliers with their servants and dependents to this region. He gave generous recognition however to the Scotch merchants, "an intellectual, moral, industrious, and honest race—who settled along the rivers and in the towns and villages, soon grew rich, and intermarried with cavalier families." Likewise, in his eulogistic fashion he praised the Huguenots as "a race of men unsurpassed by any other whatever." Nor did he overlook the potential aristocratic element of Scotch Jacobites who came in large numbers to Virginia after the failure of the elder and younger Pretenders in 1715 and 1745. These came not as merchants but as practitioners of the learned professions.[13] Of their descendants the "Cho-

[12] *Ibid., 1830,* 10–11, 84–85.

[13] George Fitzhugh, "The Valleys of Virginia—The Rappahannock," in *De Bow's Review,* XXVI (1859), 273.

tankers," of whom he knew a good deal at first hand, he observed, "Their hearts were bigger than their purses. They generally broke, or became embarrassed, and moved South and West to mend their fortunes." In a reminiscent mood he wrote in 1861 of his early neighborhood:

> In flush times, forty years ago [1821], when corn, wheat, and tobacco, sold well, or they failing, the negroes fetched a good price, all the world flocked to Chotank, or rather Chotank included Charles and St. Mary's county, in Maryland, Alexandria and Fredericksburg, extended over to the Rappahannock, and up to Culpeper and Prince William. After the hard times from 1825 to 1835, there was a pretty general crash and breakup, and Chotank, for some years, collapsed, dwarfed, and dwindled down to the little parish of St. Paul's, some fifteen miles long by five wide.[14]

Many descendants of indentured servants and a few—very few, said Fitzhugh—of transported convicts made an additional blend to the population. With the decline of immigration, however, a strong homogeneous character was given to the neighborhood.

Fitzhugh's first recollections of Chotank were of a few dominant families whose plantations enclosed most of the area about the creek and its near-by tributaries, particularly the estates of the prominent Richard Stuart of Cedar Grove, Needham L. Washington of Waterloo, and Henry Fitzhugh of Bedford. But a democratic tone of frontier vintage still obtained in the era of the War of 1812, and wealth, George Fitzhugh insisted, was actually a handicap to acceptance in the society of small independent farmers. Most of the neighbors and many visitors appeared occupied in a "continuous round of parties and frolicking"; and the absence of a church was but indicative of frontier conditions rather than religious disbelief. Among the citizens who were to achieve national recognition were Senator Henry

[14] *Id.*, "Chotank, Alexandria—A Dive into Herculaneum," *loc. cit.*, 77, 78.

S. Foote and Colonel Thomas Ludwell Alexander of the Federal army.[15]

Fitzhugh's earliest formal education was modest enough. He attended a "field school," possibly of the log-cabin type that he describes in one of his local portrayals. This did not necessarily mean crushing poverty, for the wealthy, as well as the poor, usually created a local board to finance and administer the neighborhood school. Fitzhugh never spoke very highly of the schoolmaster's knowledge, but, in his paradoxical fashion, the Virginian insisted that the martinet's discipline of the field school, even its insistence on memorizing uncomprehended phrases of the classics, had considerable value for life. In his later years he related to his admiring grandchildren that he became so proficient in Latin that as a child of nine he was put in charge of the class during the temporary absence of his teacher. The stirring contemporary battle of Waterloo left so deep an impression upon his youthful mind that he was able to draw upon his intensive readings of this event thereafter for his visitors, and with such fidelity to detail as to suggest more than a bare secondhand knowledge.[16]

There was little classroom education for Fitzhugh beyond these years in the field school. Whether his curtailed opportunities were due to his father's early death, or to the agricultural decline of the middle twenties which evidently made necessary the sale of Bellmount, is not clear. As in the case of many other Virginians who were to rise to future professional success, Fitzhugh's education was largely a matter of self-application and extensive reading. His writings, as was common in the ante-bellum era, were to bristle with Latin phrases and occasionally, French words. He acquired the easy confidence of the self-educated despite the apparent shallow basis of his fund of knowledge, particularly in economics and *belles-lettres*.

[15] *Ibid.*, 78.

[16] Notes of Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith, September 9, 1939.

After reading law books in the office of a prominent attorney whom he regarded as a "Napoleon of the bar," Fitzhugh became intimately associated with him in his early practice. The young lawyer preferred civil to criminal cases, but in neither field did he distinguish himself. His limited rural practice, reduced still further by a pronounced distaste for legal routine, made the problem of earning a livelihood ever a matter of immediate concern. But the experience in addressing juries which he acquired was to prove useful in preparing convincing essays in the defense of slavery; and he came to attribute his technique of persuasion—a later generation would call it propaganda—to his long experience in swaying a local jury in behalf of his client.

These years were already marked by his lifelong recurrent insomnia of which he has left a vivid picture:

> At this time I had begun to practice at the bar with a distinguished jurist, who could sleep where, when, and as long or short a time as he pleased. He slept as sweetly amid the noise of a court-room, when he was not engaged in the business going on, as on his pillow at midnight; and habitually took cat-naps in his buggy as he drove to and from courts. . . . At almost every court I was engaged in argument on the same side, or on different sides of the same cause. We usually slept at night in the same room, or rather went to bed in the same room—he to fall instantly to sleep, and I to toss and turn all night, tormented with useless trains of argument about causes already decided and disposed of. . . . How hopeless we become to hear the cocks crowing and see the day breaking after a sleepless night! [17]

His genial personality does not appear to have suffered from his physical ailment, for both his friends and even hostile acquaintances found him even-tempered and possessing almost perfect self-control. Whatever sharp attacks his pen

[17] George Fitzhugh, "The Art of Getting to Sleep," in *Lippincott's Magazine* (Philadelphia), IV (1869), 114–16.

was to write on abolitionism, there was scarcely any visible element of rancor against the men who professed such convictions.

He confessed to an amusing dislike during his manhood of adolescent boys whose rough antics worried him. "Many a time and oft," he wrote, "have we, walking along unobservant and wrapt in thought, suddenly found ourselves in the midst of one of these boyish combats, and heard the stones whizzing by us in fearful contiguity. On such occasions we always show the white feather, and get behind a tree or enclosure, or into the nearest house." [18]

This blend of absent-mindedness and introspective isolation offers a key to his retiring nature and personality, and a partial explanation of his admittedly poor powers of realistic description which are apparent in his essays on social problems. With his gaze firmly fixed on the past, averted from the raucous advance of modern industrialism, he found romanticism almost an instinctive personal reaction. The segregation of a lifetime in rural surroundings for such a detached individual contributed to an illusion of a self-contained little sphere whose chivalrous memories furnished a measuring rod of the outside world. Since the way of life of communities beyond the Potomac did not always conform to the norm of the Northern Neck of Virginia, they suffered correspondingly in the estimation of George Fitzhugh.

[18] *Id.*, "Boys," in *De Bow's Review,* After the War Series, I (1866), 369. This impression of Fitzhugh's introspective character is confirmed by the recollection of a granddaughter. Anne Fitzhugh Maclean, Takoma Park, Md., to the author, July 29, 1939.

Chapter II

LIFE IN PORT ROYAL

THE year 1829, when George Fitzhugh was twenty-three, marked a turning point in his life. Not only did the paternal estate of Bellmount pass to other hands, but that same year he married Mary Metcalf Brockenbrough of neighboring Port Royal in Caroline County. Leaving his former home at Chotank for the classical, if somewhat decayed, mansion of the Brockenbroughs, he was to make a pleasant change in his associations and to some extent in his circumstances. An unsympathetic neighbor—from a more pretentious plantation home—referred deprecatingly in the fifties to the prevalence of bats in the crevices and eaves of Fitzhugh's "rickety old mansion, situated on the fag-end of a once noble estate." [1] This was not yet true in 1829 at least. However modest his home, Port Royal was indeed a beautiful country town, overlooking the broad Rappahannock River, and Fitzhugh's affection for it was to deepen with the passing years.

In those days Port Royal had little to commend it besides its attractive natural scenery and recollections of departed glory, suggesting to some visitors the melancholy of Goldsmith's Deserted Village. Recurrent epidemics of yellow fever, rising from the decaying millponds and marshes, furnished an added incentive for emigration. For some years the small community had been without "parson, press, church, or schoolhouse." [2] Its battered wharf was a relic of the once prosperous tobacco trade carried on directly

[1] Moncure D. Conway (ed.), *Addresses and Reprints, 1850–1907* (Boston, 1907), 112.

[2] Fredericksburg *News*, December 19, 1851.

with England and the West Indies. The coming of the railroad, far from reviving its shattered renown, only opened new lines of traffic for more fortunate rivals, and reduced the town in importance. It continued however to enjoy a wide reputation as a cultured community inherited from colonial days.

Local tradition held that Port Royal had once been considered for the site of the national government. George Washington had been a familiar visitor. At Port Conway, on the opposite side of the Rappahannock, James Madison was born and reared; he was to represent Caroline County during the first two sessions of Congress. Numerous colonial travelers were attracted to Port Royal.[3] Most significant for the future theories of George Fitzhugh was the impress of John Taylor's personality upon its political and social atmosphere. John Taylor of Caroline, statesman, author, and Revolutionary soldier, then recently deceased, had lived much of his life on his Hazelwood estate a half mile above the town. Fitzhugh, curiously enough, appeared more directly aware of his contributions to agriculture than of his social theories. Taylor, he asserted, "did quite as much to improve our system of farming, by his example, as by his writings" and "in [kind] treatment of his slaves . . . [in] commodious brick dwellings, . . . plank floors, glass windows."[4] His intellectual influence, however, is evident in Fitzhugh's own theories and politics, particularly his militant agrarian regionalism, his condemnation of governmental favors to privileged commercial interests, and above all his predominantly economic approach to social problems.[5]

[3] A French visitor of 1765 wrote exuberantly of the beautiful level country about the town and of the excellent transportation facilities for large vessels afforded up to that point by the deep Rappahannock River. "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, I," in *American Historical Review* (New York), XXVI (1921), 726–47.

[4] Fitzhugh, "The Valleys of Virginia—The Rappahannock," *loc. cit.*, 279.

[5] For John Taylor, see Eugene T. Mudge, *The Social Philosophy of John*

Port Royal had been laid out in 1744 on a rectangular pattern at a narrow and tortuous point of the Rappahannock River. Its small population of four to five hundred was almost equally divided between whites and blacks, many of whom were free Negroes. In the valley below the town Negroes far outnumbered whites, sometimes four or five to one. Surrounding Port Royal were the spacious country seats of historic Virginia families, Belgrove, Walsingham, and Woodlawn of the Turners, Millbank of Augustine Fitzhugh, and Camden, an eighteenth century Italian home of William Pratt. Within the town were native families, owners of small farms, who, Fitzhugh liked to believe, were thoroughly homogeneous in origin: the Catletts, Thorntons, Boulwares, Taliaferros, Buckners, Brockenbroughs, Lightfoots, and others with names familiar in Virginia's history. These had lived in their old-fashioned cottages for several generations amidst their evergreens, ivy, and colorful flowers which gave the village its distinctive character.

"Come and see Port Royal," wrote Fitzhugh proudly in *De Bow's Review;* "come late in April, or in May or June, when the crops are growing, the flowers blooming, the birds singing, and the placid lakelike river just rippling into smiles. You shall dream yourself in Geneva with her lake and her villas before you." Here, he boasted, murder was unknown; gross ignorance, starvation, unemployment were absent. Nothing dramatic ever occurred; only eternal peace, plenty, good order, and piety. While this idyllic picture was retouched for the benefit of Northern readers, as is apparent from a glance at local catastrophes reported in the press, Virginians familiar with Port Royal agreed that "the village of flowers" deserved its reputation for beauty. Such an atmosphere, contended Fitzhugh, bred true Southern conservatism.[6]

Taylor of Caroline (New York, 1939). Fitzhugh's library included several of Taylor's works.

[6] Fitzhugh, "The Valleys of Virginia—The Rappahannock," *loc. cit.,* 281–82.

With his flair for genealogy Fitzhugh found much to interest him in the diary of his wife's grandfather, Austin Brockenbrough, "a man of no little notoriety in Virginia," as he admitted. Austin had been a Loyalist during the Revolution, although serving under Washington on Braddock's expedition. Petitioning the Virginia legislature to remain at Port Royal as a passive citizen, he was not only refused, but no less than five companies from Richmond, Caroline, and Westmoreland counties advanced upon his home, evidently determined on mischief. Thereupon he fled to England, leaving a father and brother to join the American cause. Life in England was more than ordinarily convivial for Austin; and his diary led Fitzhugh to remark, "The manners and morals of London must have been very bad at that time." Ultimately Brockenbrough was permitted to return in peace to his home at Port Royal to marry a Miss Champe of King George County.[7]

Among his prominent relatives was Dr. John Brockenbrough of Richmond, president of the Bank of Virginia and active politically in the Jefferson clique of the "Richmond Junto," who corresponded regularly with Fitzhugh and offered the hospitality of his home to the country lawyer during the latter's frequent visits to the state capital. In more stirring times this Brockenbrough residence was to be the executive mansion of the Confederacy. Other Brockenbroughs were well known in Virginia as large planters and slaveholders. Fitzhugh, it appears, acquired several slaves through his marriage to a Brockenbrough. Nor was this family of less distinguished forbears than the Fitzhughs, for one ancestor was Sir Robert Brakenbury, Lieutenant of the Tower, a figure celebrated in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, whose deep sense of honor forbade him to carry out an order for the execution of the royal princes and who finally perished on Bosworth Field, one of the "men of name," in

[7] Fitzhugh to Bishop William Meade, in William Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia* (Philadelphia, 1861), II, 474–77.

Shakespeare's phrase, to go down as a victim of England's early civil war—the War of the Roses.[8]

One finds few revealing references to Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh in her husband's letters and general writings. She evidently occupied the unobtrusive role of wife and mother which Fitzhugh considered the only natural position for one of her sex. Her two sisters, Elizabeth and Lucy, had married into the Thornton and Peyton families of Port Royal and the social relations between these members appear to have been close. Beginning in 1831 when Mary gave birth to Sarah Champe, there was a steady accretion to the Fitzhugh family until it included nine children.[9]

Robert Hunter Fitzhugh, probably named after Fitzhugh's political idol, Robert M. T. Hunter, was born in 1836, and was given educational advantages his father had not received. He attended near-by Rappahannock Academy which enjoyed a wide reputation and whose curriculum consisted of Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, English, and drawing.[10] Later he was to graduate from the University of Virginia and to serve in Lee's armies as a military engineer, ranking as a captain. Another son, George Stuart Fitzhugh, born in 1844, was trained for the Episcopalian clergy and was ordained in 1873.[11]

Domestic life was accompanied by profound tragedies. Harriet Marmion, born in 1841, died at the age of two. Arthur Brockenbrough, born in 1834, was drowned during the fifties. Lucy Stuart, one of the oldest of the children,

[8] *Richard III,* V, v. Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith to the author, September 9, 1939. One member of the family asserts that George Fitzhugh's wife owned one hundred slaves. This seems difficult to accept on the basis of other facts.

[9] Anne Fitzhugh Maclean to *id.,* July 29, 1939; *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* IX (1902), 102.

[10] Fredericksburg *News,* August 31, 1849; August 28, 1854. Philosophy and chemistry appear to have been added to the curriculum by 1850.

[11] Marshall Wingfield, *A History of Caroline County* (Richmond, 1924), 280.

became engaged to William Mahone, a teacher at the Rappahannock Academy, whom Fitzhugh befriended on one occasion, and who was destined for a brilliant career as a Confederate general, a state political leader, and a railroad businessman. She, too, died during the fifties, shortly before the date set for her wedding.[12] One can only infer the effect of these misfortunes upon Fitzhugh's outlook, offering possibly a factor which gave edge to his militant defense of the South and his insistence upon the preservation of the traditional family institution from liberal innovations.

Among Fitzhugh's new neighbors several were singled out for intimacy in whom he confided his plans and ideas for a literary career. Most intimate were his relations with the Reverend William Friend, an Episcopalian like himself, whose voracious reading made him particularly congenial to Fitzhugh, although he complained half-seriously in later years of Friend, "He always reads, never thinks. I think for him." [13] The minister's library, which Fitzhugh believed was the best in Virginia, became his favorite rendezvous. Friend's tendency to involve himself constantly in debt for books and his adventures with a run-away horse were equally subjects for common jest. Sometimes Friend's moral judgments in literature inspired both men to vehement discussion, although Fitzhugh was not far behind in judging literary qualities by the standards of morality.

Far more intellectual than Friend was Fitzhugh's associate, Frederick William Coleman, who had brilliantly completed his work for a master's degree at the University of Virginia in preparation for his post as principal of the noted Concord Academy. Virginians were proud that he had replaced the "tattling and thrashing" system of the Yankee schoolmasters of Caroline County by his insistence upon a gentlemanly code of honor. He was a firm believer

[12] Notes of Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith, September 19, 1939; Nelson M. Blake, *William Mahone of Virginia* (Richmond, 1935), 18n.

[13] Fitzhugh to George F. Holmes, February 5, 1855, in George Frederick Holmes Letter Book (Duke University Library, Durham).

in Taylor's agrarian philosophy and became an ardent supporter of Hunter, state rights leader of Virginia. Fitzhugh, in an eccentric mood, wrote of him, "Our friend Frederick Coleman never reads, but eats, drinks, smokes, and *thinks*. He is a fine talker, a fine scholar and a fine thinker." [14] This was intended as a superlative compliment, comparing him to the disadvantage of the bookish Friend.

Fitzhugh far preferred these friends and his long walks about Port Royal to his precarious law practice. He confessed, in fact, a fear that some "obtrusive bore of a client" would disturb the serenity of his repose. "Listening to clients," he wrote during the period of his newspaper career, "is ten times worse [than reading editorial exchanges], and if persevered in, would make a man idiotic. No possible amount of fee can compensate a lawyer for the agonies he suffers from the needless reiteration of impertinent details by clients. This horror at the approach of clients is as natural and universal as the dread of snakes." Occasionally visiting Fredericksburg, twenty-two miles distant, he enjoyed the opportunities for "killing time like a gentleman" and viewed commercial activity with a disdainful eye. "We like the results of busy industry," he admitted in 1860, "but cannot bear to witness its processes." [15] Not infrequently his finances reached so deplorable a state that he was acutely embarrassed.

He traveled but rarely outside of tidewater Virginia, confining his trips, like many, perhaps most, of his neighbors, largely to near-by Richmond, Fredericksburg, and the city of Washington. Once, it appears, he enjoyed a steamboat ride on the Mississippi River and only in 1855 did he visit the North. "We were never two weeks at a time from under the family roof, until we had passed middle life," he later admitted.[16] His writings were to reflect this

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] George Fitzhugh, "Make Home Attractive," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVIII (1860), 626.

[16] *Id., Cannibals All! or, Slaves without Masters* (Richmond, 1857), 284.

limitation in an obvious tendency to state sweeping generalizations regarding the sections, which frequently were no better than caricatures of the facts.

Long periods of inactivity gave him ample time for the independent reading which constituted his true education. He had a marked preference for the British reviews, then at the height of their popularity in the United States and particularly the South. Such tastes were cheaply satisfied through American economies in publishing foreign works. Leonard Scott and Company of New York, for example, reprinted the five leading British journals which Fitzhugh read avidly at one third of the price paid by the English reader. These were largely Tory, or at least moderately conservative Whig journals: the *Edinburgh Review,* the *London Quarterly,* the *Westminster Review, Blackwood's Magazine,* and the *North British Review.* Fitzhugh never tired of praising these journals which brought the European intellectual maelstrom of revolution and reaction to his door. He was ever to be far more detailed and specific in dealing with European trends than when discussing the affairs of South Carolina or Mississippi.

In 1855 Fitzhugh, experiencing a mood of profound dejection, made an amazing confession regarding the bareness of the erudition commonly attributed to him. "All these things which I thought original with me," he wrote to his friend, George Frederick Holmes, "I find in Aristotle. I am in a fix. If I did read him, I am a plagiarist. But if I write again, I'll make a clean breast and acknowledge my pseudo-learning is all gathered from Reviews. I never read a Socialist author treating his subject philosophically in my life. Newspapers, novels, Reviews, are the sources of my information." [17] Among the novelists he preferred the Tory romanticists, particularly Bulwer-Lytton, Disraeli, and Scott; for the rising school of European realists he expressed deep suspicion, condemning their frank discussion

[17] *Id.* to Holmes, April 11, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

of sex and marriage. "We rarely read novels," he wrote in 1860, "and only read them for the interest we feel in the plot." [18]

The winter of 1829–1830 which brought Fitzhugh to Port Royal and her decaying economic life, had been a time of soul-searching for all Virginia as delegates in the constitutional convention sought to explain the relative decline of their state's prosperity in comparison with the substantial progress of the Western states. Jeffersonian misgivings, expressed by some, that slavery might be a causal factor were quickly set aside.[19] Conservative opposition of the tidewater counties to a statesmanlike economic program of internal improvements forced continued preoccupation with secondary political issues. Fitzhugh, while styling himself a conservative, resented this type of reactionary attitude. "Tide-water old fogyism," he declared in an article of 1859, "retains its dogged, do-nothing spirit. It hates and opposes railroads, canals, daily mails, and other modern innovations, quite as cordially as its ancestry hated and opposed the looms." [20]

Fortunately for Virginia, a marked economic revival set in during the forties and fifties which was reflected in a growth of population and exports. Once more the immigration balance turned in favor of the state and Northern manufacturers and farmers sought to make profitable investments in Virginia.[21] This change was due to a variety of factors but notably to the improved condition of the world market, especially Britain's shift to free trade; to this

18 The Port Royal (Va.) *Times,* in an article which strongly suggests Fitzhugh's authorship, expressed similar literary preferences. Fredericksburg *News,* September 30, 1852; George Fitzhugh, "Blackwood," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIX (1860), 739; *id.,* "The English Reviews," *ibid.,* XXVIII (1860), 392–405.

19 Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald,* November 7, 1829.

20 Fitzhugh, "The Valleys of Virginia—The Rappahannock," *loc. cit.,* 275.

21 Fredericksburg *News,* October 25, 1850. The income of Virginia's government increased by $100,000 from 1845 to 1850 without any rise in the tax rate.

may be added the expanding urban domestic market and the agricultural revolution in technique which had swept the state.

John Taylor had now a brilliant successor, Edmund Ruffin, in the application of scientific agriculture. Ruffin exploded the popular myth of soil exhaustion by his observations on the influence of lime or marl upon such areas, concluding that many so-called exhausted farms needed only this essential ingredient which was easily accessible in tidewater Virginia. Others were to follow. Matthew Fontaine Maury began the successful application of the science of meteorology to agricultural purposes and the revolutionary experiments of Cyrus K. McCormick, another Virginian, with the reaper revealed the fresh energies of an agricultural renaissance.

Port Royal profited immediately from these developments. As the former home of John Taylor it was chosen the site for state agricultural conventions as well as for county societies. Dr. Edmund P. White of Caroline County, a friend of Fitzhugh's, became an acknowledged leader of the new experimental agriculture during the 1850's. The Rappahannock Valley became more healthful as its marshes and other spots breeding epidemics were eliminated.[22] By 1851 the town acquired a monthly newspaper, the Port Royal *Times,* which was published in Fredericksburg; reports that another newspaper would be established were current.[23] The Catletts and Grays were engaged in building operations and even Fitzhugh appeared to be participating. He took pride in the current economic revival as an evidence of the vitality and soundness of his state and was particularly active in a movement to establish a bank at Port Royal.[24]

For a brief period Fitzhugh contemplated a plan un-

[22] Open letter of Edmund P. White, in Fredericksburg *News,* January 2, 1852. White blamed Virginia's preoccupation with party politics, to the exclusion of vital social issues, for its previous decline.

[23] Fredericksburg *News,* September 23, 1851.

[24] White to Fitzhugh, December 11, 16, 1852, *ibid.*

usual for himself: the rebuilding of a wharf at the public landing of the town which had gone down in 1840 and remained ever since a series of rotting piles on the waterfront, a dangerous impediment to navigation. His wife Mary had inherited a modest ferry service consisting of one scow rowed by two men. He petitioned the legislature for the privilege of building the wharf and for charging a fee to all who used its facilities.[25] Unfortunately, this plan was challenged by his neighbor, Elizabeth Quesenberry, who already operated a private wharf the value of which would be seriously impaired by Fitzhugh's project. Her annual fees of less than one hundred dollars suggest the petty extent of Fitzhugh's project.[26] Most unflattering to Fitzhugh's reputation as a lawyer was the fact that the legislature rejected his petition on the ground that he had failed to meet the statutory requirement for petitions of a month's notice to all concerned.[27]

Another project, which reflects the new constructive energies of the early fifties, was Fitzhugh's popular petition signed by many citizens of Caroline County for the construction of a plank road or a railroad from Millford in that county to Port Royal and for a second connection to Sparta. These roads were intended to be feeders to the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad. Fitzhugh argued that the road would be "of inestimable advantage to the people of the Northern Neck as affording them an outlet into the world. The trade of Richmond too will be benefitted by these roads and much trade be diverted from Baltimore to that city." [28] The legislature, divided at that time politically

25 "Petition of George Fitzhugh to the Legislature of Virginia for the privilege of building a wharf at the public landing in Port Royal and of charging wharfage at the same," January 10, 1850 (Virginia State Library, Richmond); Skinker, *Samuel Skinker and His Descendants,* 170–71.

26 "Remonstrance of Mrs. Elizabeth Quesenberry against the Petition of George Fitzhugh, etc.," January 21, 1850 (Virginia State Library).

27 *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia for the Session of 1849–50* (Richmond, 1850), 139, 199, 314; Fredericksburg *News,* January 15, 25, 1850.

28 "Petition of George Fitzhugh and other citizens of Caroline County, etc.," January 21, 1853 (Virginia State Library).

over the issue of internal improvements, permitted the proposal to be buried by the Committee on Roads and Internal Navigation.

These results of the awakening of sleepy Port Royal as well as tidewater Virginia in general were to color much of Fitzhugh's thinking. The pioneer efforts of Virginia agricultural scientists and the renewed movement for a thorough system of internal improvements lent tangible form to his ideal of a unified Virginia, a fusion of tidewater, piedmont, and the northwest counties, possessed of the major attributes of nationalism, but within a loosely federated union. Hence he was to praise Governor Henry Wise's efforts to construct roads and railroads to the western counties as those of a great statesman who came to "Virginianise Virginia."

Port Royal took its politics seriously, perhaps too seriously, a besetting sin of ante-bellum Virginians. Local party lines were not always distinct upon national issues, and rival state leaders like Hunter, Wise, and John B. Floyd attracted personal followings. The major parties were almost equally represented in Port Royal. In the election of 1852, for example, Winfield Scott received sixty-eight votes to Franklin Pierce's sixty-seven. While election days here were usually staid affairs, pre-election activity was far from dull. Near-by Bowling Green, the county seat, frequently combined the colorful "court days" with the county political meetings. Citizens visited Bowling Green on Court Day whether they had business or not. A Port Royal observer described this melee of activity in 1852:

> The court green of Caroline presents the world in miniature. More persons attended our court, than perhaps can be found at any other Court House in the State. . . . Every kind of business is carried on at the same time. You can get stuck in a horse trade, or skinned in a money transaction. You can buy a cake of soap warranted to move grease spots, or purchase an entire drove of mules all warranted to be young, and free from spot or blemish.

You can hear an argument on law in the Court House, or a harangue on politics in the Court Yard. You can buy any style of vehicle from Noah's ark up to the latest style of manufacture. You can keep as sober as a judge; or get as drunken as David's son.[29]

But the local patriotism of the writer caused him to add quickly that there were less drinking, fighting, and gambling at the Caroline Courthouse than anywhere else in Virginia.

Fitzhugh took an active role at the political gatherings of county Democrats in Bowling Green. Sometimes he acted as chief speaker or secretary and occasionally was chosen as a county delegate to the state and national conventions. However, he refused steadfastly to become a candidate for any office although he played an important part in originating party resolutions for the county organization intended for state and national scrutiny.[30] He prided himself on his "regularity." "I have always belonged to the National Wing of the Democratic Party," he wrote in a letter of application for employment to President Buchanan during 1857.[31] On one occasion when a nonpartisan county convention attempted to select Fitzhugh as their delegate to a state conference in 1850, he indignantly spurned their offer, reaffirming his loyalty to the conservative wing of the Democratic party.[32]

But the party and Fitzhugh had both changed since his twenty-first year. "We were radical when young," he admitted in 1859, "and so was the party. The advance of age, and maturer judgment, have made us conservative, and we find that the Democratic party is becoming quite as con-

[29] Port Royal (Va.) *Times,* reprinted in Fredericksburg *News,* September 27, 1852.

[30] Evidence of Fitzhugh's participation in local politics appears regularly in the Richmond *Semi-Weekly Examiner,* particularly from 1848 to 1854.

[31] Fitzhugh to James Buchanan, March 24, 1857, Files of the Attorney General (The National Archives, Washington).

[32] *Id.* to the Editors, July 18, 1850, Richmond *Semi-Weekly Examiner,* July 26, 1850.

servative as we." [33] This evidently referred to a brief period when Fitzhugh apparently accepted the teachings of Jeffersonian liberalism and its implied condemnation of slavery. In common with a rising generation of Virginians, however, who preferred to interpret Jefferson and Madison's famous Resolution of 1798 in Calhounian terms of state rights, he came to endorse fully a sectional philosophy which could defend the position of the South in the Union as a minority group. For the remainder of the Jeffersonian program, particularly the equalitarian doctrines of the Declaration of Independence, he developed with the years an increasing abhorrence.

One of Fitzhugh's earliest political mentors was Robert M. T. Hunter of neighboring Essex County, to whom he attributed the leadership of the advancing conservative revolution in the South. While there is reason to doubt this estimate of Hunter's actual influence upon the South as a whole, he appears to have consolidated a considerable following in Virginia and elsewhere behind his militant banner of state rights. Although he had been elected by the Whig party to the state legislature during 1835–1837, he maintained a position of neutrality in partisan politics which added to his strength. Ultimately he arrived at a compromise with the Democrats of his state and took up the scepter of the declining Calhoun.[34]

"He is so far every thing I could desire," declared Fitzhugh enthusiastically of Hunter in 1839 just before the latter's election to the Speakership. As the election of 1840 came on, Fitzhugh sounded out the sentiments of Caroline Whigs on the national candidates evidently in order to persuade Hunter to support Van Buren and the Democrats rather than William Henry Harrison.

[33] *Id.*, "The Old Dominion—Valley of the Rappahannock," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVI (1859), 381.

[34] Charles H. Ambler (ed.), "Correspondence of Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter, 1826–1876," in American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1916, II (Washington, 1918), 7–9.

I have not seen one single whig to whom the nomination of Harrison is acceptable. Many already declare they will vote for Van Buren in preference, some say they will not vote at all, and the rest that they will vote for any body sooner than Van Buren and for that reason alone will sustain Harrison.[35]

He suggested that Hunter declare himself unreservedly for Van Buren's re-election. "I sometimes fear," he wrote immediately afterwards, "that Calhoun's friends may run him against Van Buren at [the] next election, if they do, Harrison will certainly be elected. As an original question I should prefer Calhoun, but the only way to make him President is to wait till Van's eight years expire." [36]

Reading the news of Hunter's elevation to the Speakership in 1839, Fitzhugh expressed his keen delight and wrote that he would no longer presume to advise him on the choice of a Presidential candidate, although he hoped Hunter would support Van Buren. Hunter refused, however, to support the New Yorker. On June 29, 1840, he strengthened his neutral position by declaring publicly that he could support neither Harrison nor Van Buren, since both had favored Jackson's Proclamation and Force Bill directed against South Carolina during the nullification crisis. Besides, he said, Van Buren desired a protective tariff, to which he was opposed. Virginia, however, cast its vote for Van Buren in that election.[37]

Fitzhugh's admiration for Van Buren apparently began with the Panic session of 1837 when the new President supported his refusal to grant financial favors to distressed economic interests by asserting the principles of limited government. At a meeting of the Caroline Democratic Association on March 11, 1844, Fitzhugh presented the following endorsement of Van Buren which indicated the Virginian's politics of that period:

[35] Fitzhugh to Robert M. T. Hunter, December 15, 1839, *ibid.*, 30.

[36] *Id.* to *id.*, December 17, 1839, *ibid.*, 30–31.

[37] Henry H. Simms, *The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824–1840* (Richmond, 1929), 155–56.

Resolved, That the subjoined passage from the message of Martin Van Buren at the Extra Session in 1837, is replete with wisdom and sound political science; sternly advocates justice, virtue, and morality in the administration of Government, and rejects those legislative expedients which in times of pecuniary embarrassments are too often resorted to to relieve the distresses of the privileged few at the expense of the laboring many; that such doctrines boldly and fearlessly expressed, at a crisis so trying, prove that Mr. Van Buren is a truly wise and devoted patriot, ready to sacrifice all selfish considerations on the altar of his country and of its Constitution. . . .[38]

Then followed a significant extract from Van Buren's message, which apparently pleased the Caroline Democrats, who accepted the resolution recommending it to the National Democratic Convention assembled at Baltimore. The President had written these words as the severe depression of 1837 had brought with it popular riots of Jackson Jacobins in his own state of New York and demonstrations in New York City carried the banner, "Bread, meat, rent, fuel! Their prices must come down!" The military was sent to the scene.[39] Businessmen urged governmental subsidies and others demanded inflation. Whigs blamed Jackson's removal of Federal bank deposits from Biddle's bank and his Specie Circular for the crisis; and Van Buren, as Jackson's appointed heir, shared in the obloquy. The major portion of Van Buren's special message, which was not cited by Fitzhugh, dealt primarily with the financial aspects of the crisis, dwelling upon the necessity for an independent Federal treasury project which would replace the Biddle system and remove the abuses involved in Jackson's "pet banks." The section quoted in the Caroline County resolution ran in language suggestive of the political debate in a more serious economic crisis one century later:

[38] Richmond *Republican Sentinel,* March 23, 1844.
[39] Edward M. Shepard, *Martin Van Buren* (Boston, 1888), 269–70.

Those who look to the action of this Government for specific aid to the citizen to relieve embarrassments arising from losses by revulsions in commerce and credit lose sight of the ends for which it was created and the powers with which it is clothed. It was established to give security to us all in our lawful and honorable pursuits, under the lasting safeguard of republican institutions. It was not intended to confer special favors on individuals or on any classes of them, to create systems of agriculture, manufactures, or trade, or to engage in them either separately or in connection with individual citizens or organized associations. . . . All communities are apt to look to government for too much. Even in our own country, where its powers and duties are so strictly limited, we are prone to do so, especially at periods of sudden embarrassment and distress. But this ought not to be.[40]

Even in later years, when Fitzhugh became a determined opponent of laissez-faire doctrines in economics, sociology, and political science, he could still subscribe to the political notion that the Federal government's activities were strictly circumscribed. Hence he could wholeheartedly support Van Buren's assertion of the central government's function as a mere police organization. There was no contradiction involved in his position, for he did not look upon the Federal union as a government in the complete sense, but as a league of state governments which, being of natural growth and origin, need not accept individually the limitations of laissez-faire ideals.

A Richmond newspaper, the *Republican Sentinel,* warmly applauded the Caroline resolutions, although unprepared to endorse Van Buren's candidacy. Attacking Henry Clay and his "Federal clique," the editor asserted that Fitzhugh's resolution was "the banner, on which every freeman may rally—every friend of State's Rights . . . every man, who has a true regard for our *free* institutions, and for our *Federal* Republic—every man who knows that

[40] James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1897* (Washington, 1900), III, 324–46.

Government cannot do *every* thing for our good." [41] The Federal government, he argued, which embraced such a variety of soils, productions, and interests could only injure one section while attempting to aid another.

It was possible for a state rights man to support Van Buren as late as 1844 so long as the slavery issue remained in the background. Van Buren had scrupulously avoided this delicate subject during his term in office, save for a reiteration of his previous position opposing the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of the slave states, and declining "the slightest interference" with the "institution" in the states where slavery existed. His conciliatory policy made it possible for Calhoun to declare himself an administration man and even the lukewarm Hunter supported Van Buren on such key measures as the independent subtreasury plan. But Van Buren's acceptance of the Presidential nomination by the Free Soil party in 1848 estranged Southern supporters who were particularly sensitive over the Wilmot Proviso of the previous year which had challenged slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico. Besides, Van Buren had also supported the Proviso.

Even Fitzhugh forgot his customary courtesy of expression in denouncing Van Buren during the excitement of 1847–1848 and added a condemnation of former President John Quincy Adams whose current sponsorship of anti-slavery petitions in the House of Representatives was a standing grievance to Southern members. "Adams and Van Buren," he wrote angrily, in an anonymous pamphlet, "cunning, complex, and tortuous, are fit exponents of the selfish system of universal liberty. Coriolanus, marching to the gates of Rome with dire hate and deadly indignation, is grand and noble in his revenge. Adams and Van Buren, insidiously striking with reptile fangs at the South, excite

[41] Richmond *Republican Sentinel*, March 23, 1844.

in all bosoms hatred and contempt." [42] However, his good nature reasserted itself and he apologized when he came to edit these remarks in 1854: "We wrote under angry excitement. We did Mr. Van Buren injustice and the North injustice. We believe Mr. Van Buren thoroughly patriotic, though wrong on the Proviso; and we think Northerners more fanatical than selfish." [43] No retraction was made, however, of his comment on Adams.

[42] "A Southerner" [George Fitzhugh], in *Slavery Justified* (Fredericksburg, Va., 1850).

[43] George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South; or, The Failure of Free Society* (Richmond, 1854), 244n.

Chapter III

PROSLAVERY MILITANTS OF THE 1850's

IT was inevitable for a Virginian like Fitzhugh, endowed as he was with a strong sense of loyalty to local institutions, to undertake a vigorous defense of the threatened Southern outpost of slavery. Possessed of an active mind, but with a limited fund of information regarding his section, he came forward as a propagandist rather than as a scholar, reiterating a few well-chosen arguments which might be effective in the struggle to stem the critics of the South. By the fifties, when he began his writings on slavery, the defenders of the peculiar institution had already accumulated a huge arsenal of weapons against abolitionism which included arguments based on the Bible and moral philosophy, economic need, historical example, ethnology, Aristotelian ideas of government, and a host of other factors.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century humanitarianism and liberalism carried with them fatal implications for the existence of slavery. Hence it was the task of the earlier proslavery writers to harmonize the ideals of the South with the dominant tendencies of the Western world. They assumed that Southern civilization was too intimately bound up with the traditions and values of European culture to secede in spirit from the nineteenth century itself. This position, however, appeared too passive for the younger militants of 1850 who tended to emphasize the need for a Southern nationalist culture free of the Jeffersonian liberalism imported from European shores. Slavery, they felt, must be accepted as a natural institution, not as a product of unfortunate necessity.

By 1850 a variety of factors conspired to freeze the *status quo* of the plantation system. Prior to that time the efforts of such slavery defenders as Professor Thomas R. Dew of Virginia, as well as the disappointing results of the Liberian experiment, had succeeded in eliminating Negro colonization in Africa and the West Indies as a serious solution of the race problem. Nor was the unsuccessful reconstruction process following Britain's emancipation of the blacks in the Caribbean one to attract imitators. The general reaction to slave insurrections and plots—common phenomena in the South—was to weaken the status of the free Negro, who was feared as an incendiary influence, rather than to threaten slavery as a system. The rising world demand for tropical and semitropical products during the fifties, accentuated by the drop in production among the emancipated Negroes of the Caribbean, encouraged an insistence upon slavery as a perpetual institution. All these factors, together with the mighty assaults of abolitionism, and the incessant political crises, particularly acute after the War with Mexico, prepared the groundwork for the aggressive Southern theorists of the 1850's.[1]

Although Virginia offered the heaviest guns to the proslavery argument, the states of the lower South were not far behind. Louisiana, vitally concerned for the future of its sugar, rice, and cotton fields, contributed brilliant lawyers, doctors, journalists, and clergymen whose pens did yeoman service in slavery's cause. Most prominent of her sons was James D. B. De Bow, professor of political economy at the University of Louisiana, superintendent of the Federal census, and editor of the famous New Orleans journal, *De*

[1] The most detailed summary of the proslavery writers appears in William S. Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, 1935). Another aspect is dealt with by Jeanette R. Tandy, "Pro-Slavery Propaganda in American Fiction of the Fifties," in *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Durham), XXI (1922), 41–50, 170–78; Ulrich B. Phillips, *The Course of the South to Secession: An Interpretation,* ed. by E. Merton Coulter (New York, 1939), 83–149.

Bow's Review. He sought to strengthen slavery by encouraging the economic independence of the South, especially through the mechanism of the Southern commercial conventions. The *Review* gave considerable attention to the task of fostering an indigenous Southern literature and the editor lashed the New England textbooks which still existed in the schools of his section. Most important was the literary outlet that De Bow afforded to the rising proslavery school. George Fitzhugh, William Grayson, George Frederick Holmes, Albert T. Bledsoe, William Gilmore Simms, and numerous other defenders of slavery were certain of publicity for their arguments in *De Bow's Review*.

In a pamphlet published shortly before the Civil War, *The Interest in Slavery of the Southern Non-Slaveholder*, De Bow argued that the great staple products of the South would cease to be grown if slavery were abolished. Britain's experiments with emancipation in the West Indies had failed while Brazil and Cuba under slavery had prospered. The cruel experience of Santo Domingo should be a warning to the Southern nonslaveholder as well, for poor whites had been massacred equally with the rich. Besides, slavery ennobled all classes of whites. "No white man at the South," he asserted, "serves another as a body servant, to clean his boots, wait on his table, and perform the menial services of his household." He believed that no actual competition existed between the slaveholding planter and the independent farmer, for their products were complementary, not competitive. Borrowing an argument made familiar by this time through Fitzhugh's writings, he stressed the fact that the South's relatively homogeneous population had tended to perpetuate the true American character, free of the isms.

> Adhering to the simple truths of the Gospel and the faith of their fathers, they have not run hither and thither in search of all the absurd and degrading isms which have sprung up in the rank soil of infidelity. . . . They are not for breaking down all

the forms of society and of religion and re-constructing them; but prefer law, order, and existing institutions to the chaos which radicalism involves.[2]

One of De Bow's most famous protégés was Dr. Josiah C. Nott, a native of South Carolina, who obtained a professorship of anatomy at the University of Louisiana in 1857–1858. Nott had collaborated with George R. Gliddon of Mobile in 1854 upon an ambitious ethnological work, *Types of Mankind,* which maintained that all races of men sprang from permanent types and left a clear inference that relegated the Negro to a perpetual status of intellectual inferiority. This position on racial differences was reiterated in various articles for *De Bow's Review* and in several medical journals. In 1856 Nott helped to edit an English translation of *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races,* written by the famous French publicist, Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau. The Frenchman had advocated a popular theory of racial determinism, an "Aryanism" since exalted by the racialists of contemporary Germany. In that edition Dr. Nott praised highly Gobineau's main contention regarding the "*permanency* of the actual moral, intellectual, and physical diversities of races" and added this endorsement, "I . . . regard most of his conclusions as incontrovertible." [3] Proslavery writers eagerly took up the alleged testimony of science, although certain Southern clergymen and their followers resented Nott's theory of the diversity of racial origins since it ran counter to the Biblical explanation.

[2] James D. B. De Bow, *The Interest in Slavery of the Southern Non-Slaveholder* (Charleston, 1860), 9; Willis D. Weatherford, *James Dunwoody Brownson De Bow (Southern Sketches,* No. 3), ed. by Joseph D. Eggleston (Charlottesville, Va., 1935), Chap. I *et passim.*

[3] Count Joseph A. de Gobineau, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races,* trans. and ed. by H. Hotz, with an appendix by Josiah C. Nott (Philadelphia, 1856), 463; James D. B. De Bow, "The Earth and Its Indigenous Races," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIII (1857), 70–71. It is only fair to add that Dr. Nott made a number of solid contributions to both ethnological and medical science.

Similar conclusions were reached by Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright of Louisiana who alleged that science had effectually disposed of the errors of Jefferson's philosophy of equality. He drew significant inferences from the "fact" that Negroes consumed less oxygen than whites. The Negro had a naturally servile mind, was a creature of feeling and imitation, while the white was endowed with thinking and reflective qualities. Hence, he concluded, the relationship of master and slave would inevitably spring up between such different "species of men." [4]

Another Louisianian, the prominent lawyer, George S. Sawyer, found the work of Nott and Cartwright of superlative excellence and the starting point of his own observations. "In no age or condition," he wrote, "has the real negro shown a capacity to throw off the chains of barbarism and brutality that have long bound down the nations of that race; or to rise above the common cloud of darkness that still broods over them." While every other nation from China to Peru had advanced along the road of civilization, the Negro, he insisted, had not, possessing an "inherent intellectual imbecility" and a sterile imitative nature.[5] Turning to societies which did not practice slavery, he drew a gloomy picture of beggary, suicide, and starvation in the Northern cities and in Britain, contrasting this situation unfavorably with the happy, well-fed slaves of the plantation. As for the equalitarianism of Jefferson he wrote deprecatingly, "Thomas Jefferson was a true patriot and a great man, but he was extremely fond of strange eccentricities, quaint expressions, glaring paradoxes, and sweeping assertions." This was singularly evident, he added, in the Declaration of Independence.[6]

[4] Samuel A. Cartwright, "Slavery in the Light of Ethnology," in E. N. Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments* (Augusta, Ga., 1860), 716.

[5] George S. Sawyer, *Southern Institutes* (Philadelphia, 1859), 192.

[6] *Ibid.*, 208. Another such work of a resident of Louisiana is John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery* (Natchez, 1852).

South Carolina, the home of Calhoun, inevitably contributed its full share of militant writers as well as implacable state rights politicians. Chancellor William Harper, discussing "Slavery in the Light of Social Ethics," boldly met the denunciations made by representatives of world opinion:

> The judgment is made up. We can have no hearing before the tribunal of the civilized world. Yet, on this very account, it is more important that we, the inhabitants of the slaveholding States of America, insulated as we are, by this institution, and cut off, in some degree, from the communion and sympathies of the world by which we are surrounded, or with which we have intercourse, and exposed continually to their animadversions and attacks, should thoroughly understand this subject, and our strength and weakness in relation to it.[7]

This virtual declaration of Southern independence was, logically enough, accompanied by an attack upon Jefferson's famous document of individual freedom. Harper adverted to the economic inequality wrought by the constant rivalry of worker and employer in free societies and the consequent creation of pauper and millionaire classes. "This inequality, this vice, this misery, this *slavery,* is the price of England's civilization," he declared.[8]

Senator James H. Hammond, former governor of South Carolina and a wealthy owner of many slaves, attracted national attention in 1858 by his aggressive statement of the South's power as derived from a harmonious blend of political and social institutions; none dared to declare war on Cotton, for Cotton was King! "In all social systems," he said, "there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. . . . It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build

[7] William Harper, "Slavery in the Light of Social Ethics," in Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King,* 550.

[8] *Ibid.,* 567.

either the one or the other, except on this mud-sill." Since the Negro represented an inferior race, it was obvious that he constituted the "mud-sill" rather than the white man. He warned the North that their white "slaves," who suffered hardships as laborers, had dangerous potentialities for overturning property relations above Mason and Dixon's line. "How would you like," he asked, "for us to send lecturers and agitators North to teach these people this, to aid in combining, and to lead them . . . ?" Yet Northerners meddled dangerously with the slave.[9]

In an early essay, *Slavery in the Light of Political Science,* reprinted in 1860, Hammond praised the "inobtrusive piety" of the South and its freedom from the isms. "We have been so irreverent," he wrote taunting the North, "as to laugh at Mormonism and Millerism, which have created such commotions further North; and modern prophets have no honor in our country. Shakers, Rappists, Dunkers, Socialists, Fourrierists [*sic*], and the like, keep themselves afar off." He attacked the "higher law" doctrines of the abolitionists and expressed a fear that the North was creating a "transcendental religion," one too pure and elevated for the Bible, based on self-righteousness and self-exaltation.[10]

The Reverend Iveson L. Brookes of Hamburg, South Carolina, met the charge that the South was isolating itself from "all Christendom" in retaining slavery by a logic similar to that of Senator Hammond on the higher law:

> We reply that a vast proportion of Christendom have corrupted the sacred institutions of heaven, and are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, and that perhaps, in no instance have they arrayed themselves more foolishly and unnecessarily against the purposes of God, than in their fanatically presumptuous attempt to frustrate his institution of negro slavery.[11]

[9] *Appendix to the Congressional Globe,* 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 71.

[10] Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King,* 643.

[11] Iveson L. Brookes, *A Defense of the South against the Reproaches and Incroachments of the North* (Hamburg, S.C., 1850), 8.

Christopher G. Memminger of Charleston, destined to be Secretary of the Treasury in the Confederacy, although a moderate on the slavery issue, expressed a thesis in 1851 which found popularity with many militants. Statesmen in Europe and America, he believed, were no longer concerning themselves primarily with the foreign relations of the state but appeared bent on "examining the foundations and structure of Society itself." Socialists and Chartists of Europe were assailing existing institutions and contending for "a vague principle of absolute equality" against the conservative forces of order. This convulsion now threatened America, he declared. Northern leading minds were attempting to divert the attention of the masses from their grievances by turning the force of revolutionary agitation upon the slave system of the South.[12] This thesis was strikingly similar to the analysis that Fitzhugh had published the preceding year.

Especially effective among the propaganda in behalf of slavery was a lengthy poem published in 1856 by William J. Grayson of Charleston, "The Hireling and the Slave." Grayson, a former congressman, had also won a reputation in the South as a romantic poet of rural life. Now, at the age of seventy, Grayson penned a defense of slavery which contained so incisive an attack on free labor that the Southern militants were delighted. De Bow wrote a warm appraisal of the poem, expressing his enthusiasm for its arraignment of New England's pharasaical morality and reprinted much of the poem in various numbers of the *Review*.[13] In several articles Grayson attacked the arrogance of the British traveler in the South who was so frequently abolitionist in sympathy. "The whole question of labor," he wrote in *De Bow's Review*, "is subject, indeed, to laws

12 Christopher G. Memminger, *Lecture Delivered before the Young Men's Library Association of Augusta, April 10, 1851* (Augusta, Ga., 1851).

13 James D. B. De Bow, "The Hireling and the Slave," in *De Bow's Review*, XXI (1856), 248–56; William J. Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave, Chicora and Other Poems* (Charleston, 1856).

beyond the control of sentimental travellers, demagogues, or philanthropists." [14] Thus did political economy come to the rescue of slavery. What is freedom, he asked rhetorically, to the man "who lives on offal picked up in the gutter, or to the wretched needlewoman, who flies to the Thames to get away from hunger and infamy?"

Mississippi, home of Jefferson Davis, produced its quota of militant proslavery writers. Dr. E. N. Elliott, president of Planters College, edited one of the most significant volumes of slavery propaganda, *Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments,* which included essays by Harper, Cartwright, Hammond, Thornton Stringfellow, Charles Hodge, Albert T. Bledsoe, and David Christy. To Elliott the North was engaging in an antislavery crusade to divert attention from its own plague spot, agrarianism, as manifest in the antirent riots of upper New York state. "Ye Capitalists," he apostrophized, "Ye merchant princes, ye master manufacturers, you may excite to frenzy your Jacobin clubs, you may demoralize their minds of all ideas of right and wrong, but remember! the gu[i]llotine is suspended over your own necks!!" [15]

His fellow townsman of Port Gibson, Mississippi, Henry Hughes, appears to have originated some of the main ideas of Elliott's own essay. Hughes, a lawyer and planter, had traveled abroad during the early fifties and was influenced by the sociological methods of the disciples of Auguste Comte. In 1854 he wrote *A Treatise on Sociology,* which appeared simultaneously with Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South,* both authors sharing the honor of publishing the first work in the United States bearing the term sociology in its title. *A Treatise on Sociology* was but another proslavery book clad in sociological dress. Its attempt to remove the popular odium associated with the word slavery

[14] William J. Grayson, "Mackay's Travels in America," in *De Bow's Review,* XXVIII (1860), 65.

[15] Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King,* 898.

by redefining the Negro's service as "warranteeism" added little to the stock of proslavery arguments except to furnish another pseudoscientific sanction of the institution; and his influence upon the South was limited. Warranteeism began with the assumption that the first end of society was the existence of all, hence to realize this end, coercion by a "warrantor" was necessary for the mutual interests of both parties. Slavery in the South, he said, was but "warranteeism, with the ethnical qualification." [16]

B. F. Stringfellow of St. Louis added some concrete data to the thesis that New England's abolitionism was an outgrowth of religious infidelity and a challenge to all existing social institutions. He pointed out from the census reports, "Of the small number of churches in New England, 202 are Unitarian, 285 Universalist; while of the large number in these southern States, there are but 1 Unitarian, 7 Universalist!" [17] Southerners did not "run after strange gods." Besides, slavery ennobled the white, created an aristocracy based on color rather than money, as at the North; white women were relieved from the servile and unprotected condition of their Northern neighbors and each Southern lady became "the queen of her household, fit mate for a sovereign." He recurred to the familiar picture of Northern destitution, riots, radicalism, and urban abuses.

Proslavery arguments did not proceed exclusively from the lands south of Mason and Dixon's line. The New York *Day Book,* to which Fitzhugh contributed articles occasionally, gave loyal support to the slavery cause. David Christy, a former agent of the Ohio State Colonization Society, lent considerable comfort to Southerners by expressing his conviction that British emancipationist experiments had failed and that the products of slave labor were vitally necessary to the Christian world. Even free laborers had an interest in slavery's perpetuation and extension. Mere per-

[16] Henry Hughes, *A Treatise on Sociology* (Philadelphia, 1854), 207.
[17] B. F. Stringfellow, *Negro Slavery No Evil* (Boston, 1855), 16.

sonal liberty, even with the stimulus of wages, was insufficient to secure the industry of an ignorant population.[18] The Reverend Dr. Samuel B. How, pastor of the First Reformed Church of New Brunswick, New Jersey, viewed the slave institution largely as the obvious solution to the race problem of the South. In the North, he pointed out, Negroes lived in smaller numbers among whites and were content to "remain in a state of inferiority and subordination." [19]

Most significant were the racialist doctrines of Dr. John H. Van Evrie of New York, author of *Negroes and Negro "Slavery,"* a book of which an essential portion was published in 1853. The Negro, he asserted, was not a black white man but a different and inferior species of man—as Dr. Nott had contended. His arguments for Negro inferiority were based on a consideration of his cultural backwardness in history, the relatively small size of his brain, his peculiar posture, and his unique linguistic habits. These alleged differences were used as a scientific prop for his conclusions as to the natural and inevitable condition of perpetual slavery for the Negro. Only fanaticism, he wrote, would compel a member of the inferior race to occupy the position of the white man. He charged the British "shopocracy" with an attempt to "deface humanity" by abolitionist practices of racial equality.[20]

Van Evrie's work, even in its introductory form of 1853, received a literary ovation from numerous sources. Jefferson Davis praised its "able and manly exposure of a fallacy." De Bow expressed complete agreement with its "new and striking" views. Cartwright and Nott found Van Evrie one of themselves. Senator Daniel S. Dickinson of New York declared that the study must elevate the Caucasian

[18] David Christy, "Cotton is King; or Slavery in the Light of Political Economy," in Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King*, 52–218.

[19] Samuel B. How, *Slaveholding Not Sinful* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1856), 96–98.

[20] John H. Van Evrie, *Negroes and Negro "Slavery"* (New York, 1861).

race "to a proper conception of their mission," which must avoid the "casting down [of] barriers erected by the Almighty." Van Evrie asserted that Stephen A. Douglas was secretly distributing his pamphlet among his own constituents under the Congressional frank of Senator John Slidell of Louisiana. Even the Southern clergy, hitherto hostile to racialist theories, were now claimed by Van Evrie as hearty supporters of his writings. The author took particular pride in the acceptance of his ideas by Dr. James Hunt, F.R.S., president of the London Anthropological Society, who assumed that Americans were best informed as to Negro characteristics.[21]

George Fitzhugh professed himself converted to Van Evrie's racial position in 1861, having refused up to that time to consider any defense of slavery based on the assumption of the Negro's permanent inferiority. He corresponded for a time with the New Yorker for the purpose of collaborating with him in a fresh sociological treatment of the slavery question, but nothing apparently came of this.[22]

For Virginia, with its dual tradition of liberal agrarianism borrowed by the Jeffersonians from the European physiocrats and the feudal paternalism of an earlier day, the choice was exceedingly complex. The Negro problem, from the standpoint of both race relations and the labor system, helped to foster an environment increasingly hostile to liberal dogmas. From Europe now came the lesson that conservatism need not be in an immobile position of a decadent cause. Against the heavy tide of liberalism, the dynamic Disraeli was marshaling the fresh energies of "Young England" behind the banner of traditional Britain with its landowning aristocracy and its Established Church. During the forties Disraeli's novels *Coningsby* and *Sybil,*

21 *Id., Negroes and Negro Slavery: Introductory Number* (Baltimore, 1853), title page; James Hunt, *The Negro's Place in Nature* (New York), 1864), see Introduction by Van Evrie.

22 George Fitzhugh, "The Black and White Races of Men," in *De Bow's Review,* XXX (1861), 446–56.

eagerly read on both sides of the Atlantic, preached the gospel of Tory socialism. Conservatives on the continent like Chateaubriand, De Maistre, Bismarck, Hegel, and others presented similar formulas of defense for the old order with varying success.[23]

Fitzhugh, like Disraeli, recognized in 1850 the potentialities of militancy in a conservative cause. In a pamphlet written that year he observed:

> Young England belongs to the most conservative wing of the tory party; he inculcates strict subordination of rank; would have the employer kind, attentive and paternal, in his treatment of the operative. The operative, humble, affectionate and obedient to his employer. He is young, and sentimental, and would spread his doctrines in tracts, sonnets and novels; but society must be ruled by sterner stuff than sentiment.[24]

Whatever "sterner stuff" Fitzhugh had in mind, he made it clear that he belonged spiritually to the cause of Young England.

Another Virginian, Moncure D. Conway of Stafford County, who belonged to the Jeffersonian school, saw the parallel war of the ideologies in Europe and in his own state. He wrote of this period, "It was a time when a 'Young Virginia' was rising up to promulgate the philosophical, sociological, and ethnical excellence of slavery." Although Conway came to be regarded as a renegade to the Southern standard, he generously insisted to his Northern friends that "it was the most scholarly and philosophical young men who discarded old Virginia principles and advocated slavery *per se*." Foremost among these he placed his neighbor, George Fitzhugh.[25]

An idealization of Virginia's history, so essential to the conservative's theme, had actually begun under the liberal-

[23] The relationship of these various traditionalistic philosophies to the modern Fascist tradition is convincingly demonstrated in William M. McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler* (Boston, 1941), Chap. VIII.

[24] [Fitzhugh], *Slavery Justified*, 241.

[25] Moncure D. Conway, *Autobiography* (Boston, 1904), I, 71, 224.

romantic novelists, John P. Kennedy and Dr. William Caruthers, during the thirties.[26] Kennedy's *Swallow Barn,* published in 1832 and reprinted in 1851, did much to create the literary stereotypes of the colorful feudal past of the state. Significantly enough, his work was hailed by the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1851 as the most faithful portrayal of the Old Dominion during the 1820's that any future social historian could desire.[27] *The Cavaliers of Virginia,* published by Caruthers in 1834–1835, added measurably to the plantation tradition which came to overshadow the more prosaic tale of small independent farmers revealed by the census reports.

Another Virginian, H. A. Washington, discussing the social system of his state, wrote in 1848:

> For all must admit that the Social System of Virginia is, in many respects, a peculiar system—unlike most of the social systems by which it is surrounded—a sort of anomaly in our times. It has no parallel except in the other slave-holding states of the union, and, when closely inspected, looks very much like the remnant of an older civilization—a fragment of the feudal system floating about here on the bosom of the nineteenth century.

Virginians, he observed, had blended aristocracy and isolated country life into a unique culture which laid exceptional emphasis on "domestic manners," the sanctity of the home, and the lofty position of women.[28]

Liberalism seemed firmly ensconced in the saddle in 1831–1832 when Professor Dew of the College of William and Mary presented his classic defense of slavery before the Virginia legislature. In this and in later essays Dew at-

[26] Vernon L. Parrington, *The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800–1860,* Vol. II of *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York, 1927), Chap. V; Thomas N. Page, *The Old South* (New York, 1892), 3–92.

[27] Editor's note, in *Southern Literary Messenger* (Richmond), XVII (1851), 764.

[28] H. A. Washington, "The Social System of Virginia," *ibid.,* XIV (1848), 69.

tempted to reconcile human bondage with freedom by an analysis of Greek and Roman history. Expressing regret that Jefferson had lent the "sanction of his great name" to the attack on slavery, he went on to explain that Southern slavery was practically equivalent to Greek democracy, except for the color bar. Arguing for the natural historical origins of the institution and its special fitness for the Negro, he concluded that slavery had operated in a humane fashion because of the solid motive of self-interest. Enslaved Africans, he observed, multiplied freely without those restraints noted by Malthus, while free Indians were being exterminated. Most significant of all were the stout blows he dealt to Virginia's efforts in behalf of Negro colonization and emancipation. He concluded that "every plan of emancipation and deportation which we can possibly conceive is totally impracticable." As for the dangers of slave insurrections which troubled the members of the Virginia legislature, Dew was disposed to minimize them. Slavery, then, was to be defended as a perpetual institution.[29]

The continued popularity of Dew's early essay was considered in the Virginia press as a testimony to his influence in altering the stream of Southern opinion. When the essay was first read in the legislature, despite fresh memories of Nat Turner's insurrection, the effect was a revulsion in popular sentiment, said the Fredericksburg *News*. "The people had been deluded by false and deceptive appeals. This essay induced them to pause and reflect and the consequence was a decided impression favorable to the policy and continuance of slavery." [30] Fitzhugh, among many other contemporaries, accepted the work of Dew as epoch-making in the history of proslavery thought. From a "neces-

[29] Thomas R. Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832* (Richmond, 1832); *id., An Essay on Slavery in Pro-Slavery Argument as Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States* (Charleston, 1852), 287–462.

[30] Fredericksburg *News*, August 21, 1849.

sary evil" slavery emerged triumphantly as a "positive good" and through the efforts of the younger school of militants who rejected liberalism, free society itself was to appear a failure in comparison with it.

The men who constituted "Young Virginia" were not necessarily slaveholders, but the element of economic determinism was not wholly absent. On the eve of the Civil War, Virginia's white population of slightly over one million included some fifty thousand slaveholders. Most of this latter class owned fewer than 4 slaves each and in the entire state only 114 persons possessed as many as 100 slaves each. The concentration of slaveholders in the tidewater area, where the leading militants originated, profoundly affected the political direction of the state. While Virginia west of the Blue Ridge Mountains had 596,293 whites and 66,766 slaves, the eastern portion contained 451,006 whites and 424,099 slaves; of the latter, 173,109 lived in the twenty-two counties between the James River and North Carolina border, known popularly as the Black Belt.[31] With an economic revival affording more profitable employment of slaves, a favorable attitude toward slavery permeated slaveholder and independent farmer alike in the tidewater area. The ultimate beneficiaries of the institution, as they might consider themselves, inevitably included the articulate professional classes.

Nevertheless, dissenters were numerous; nor were these confined to western Virginia. It was not without a factual basis that William L. Yancey, Alabama extremist, described Virginia as the "mother of abolitionist ideas." Bishop William Meade, a noted Virginia historian as well as churchman, expressed his fears during the fifties that slavery had injured the religious, political, and agricultural interests of the state. Similar beliefs were held by such men as Rob-

31 Beverly B. Munford, *Virginia's Attitude toward Slavery and Secession* (London, 1909), 125–26.

ert R. Howison, the historian, Matthew F. Maury, the scientist, and even Robert E. Lee.[32] The Fredericksburg *News* expressed its exasperation in 1847, "We have often said in Virginia are to be found the most detestable Abolitionists in the Union." [33] But these dissenters found relatively few literary outlets among the leading journals of the state after 1850.

Virginia's university faculties such as those of the College of William and Mary, the University of Virginia, and Randolph-Macon College contributed their pens to the support of slavery, and in increasing numbers came to attack liberal theory as well. Among the foremost of these writers was Albert Taylor Bledsoe, a professor of mathematics at the University of Virginia, who published in 1856 *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery*. Bledsoe displayed the temper of the younger antiliberal school by concentrating his attack on Locke, Jefferson, Blackstone, and other representatives of the social contract and equalitarian philosophy. Since, he argued, no real liberty or enjoyment of natural rights could exist in a primitive state of nature, the rights and authority of civil society could not be said to derive from such an anterior state. Although human rights in civil society were of natural or divine origin, these were limited by a consideration of the requirements of the community as a whole.[34]

For the higher law doctrines of the abolitionists Bledsoe expressed profound contempt, as he also did for the liberal teachings of certain professors of ethics. To him the higher law men were moral anarchists giving a divine sanction to their personal inclinations and threatening the security of the social system in government, church, and home. "Let these principles be carried out, and there is an end to all social subordination, to all security for life and property, to

[32] *Ibid.*, 97–112. [33] Fredericksburg *News*, December 6, 1847.

[34] Albert T. Bledsoe, *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery* (Philadelphia, 1856), 20–40. This book actually appeared a year prior to the publishing date.

all guarantee for public or domestic virtue." As for women's rights, abolitionism, and kindred heresies, one could scarcely emancipate contrary to obvious divine law. The subversive results of the emancipationist spirit, he declared, existed in the contemporary social chaos of the British Caribbean colonies.[35]

Fitzhugh, in reviewing *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery* for the Richmond *Enquirer,* regarded Bledsoe with a patronizing though polite air:

> He is modest as he is learned and ingenious, and does not push his theories to their ultimate but legitimate consequences. Probably his course is the most prudent and wise one for the time. Possibly he saw that he would mar his book as a work of art were he to attempt to cover too much ground. He carries on no offensive warfare. . . . He only specially defends negro slavery, and shows only the failure of negro emancipation. He has probably left that offensive warfare which the starving, riotous, infidel and revolutionary state of free society invites, to other hands, or reserved it for the subject of another book.[36]

Far more congenial to Fitzhugh's advanced position on the failure of free societies was the work of the Reverend Dr. William A. Smith, president of Randolph-Macon College and professor of moral and intellectual philosophy. Smith had taken a prominent part in the church trial of Bishop James O. Andrew, which led to the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 along sectional lines on the slavery issue. In 1856 he publicized his academic discussions of slavery in *Lectures on the Philosophy and Practice of Slavery.* At the same time he made a number of public addresses on the theory of slavery.

Dr. Smith defended slavery as right per se and criticized the "grossly offensive error of Mr. Jefferson" on the evils of the institution. In view of the serious religious schisms

[35] *Ibid.,* 223–48.

[36] George Fitzhugh, "Bledsoe on Liberty and Slavery," in *Daily Richmond Enquirer,* July 24, 1856.

among Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians because of slavery, the time, he felt, had come for plain speaking. Like Bledsoe and others, Smith rejected Locke's social contract and the liberal natural rights contentions. These doctrines, he charged, had penetrated into the textbooks of the South and must be eradicated. His lectures covered a detailed treatment of the alleged proofs of Negro inferiority, the Biblical arguments for slavery, and the evils of free society. Smith declared that he had offered unsuccessfully to send his slave to Africa but had refused to free the Negro in Virginia in the latter's own interest.[37]

Fitzhugh had occasion to hear Dr. Smith on slavery at Bowling Green in August, 1856, as well as to review the book for the *Enquirer*. Smith, he reported approvingly, took the ground that all common labor is compulsory labor. "The free man is compelled to labor to sustain his life and that of his family. The slave is compelled to do so by command of his master." The speaker, like Fitzhugh, emphasized the pessimistic outlook for free society as resulting from the unavoidable effects of Malthusian laws upon the tendency of wages to remain at a subsistence level. "In fifty years, or less," Smith predicted, "immigration will fill up the West. Then laborers will compete for employment and reduce wages as low as in Europe." Their condition would become desperate and they would use their suffrage rights to destroy property rights and to revolutionize government. No government could be stable without slavery.[38]

Few proslavery writers could afford to ignore the arsenal of sectional weapons provided by the essays of the Reverend Dr. Thornton Stringfellow of the Episcopal Church at Richmond, whose work was characterized by the unsympa-

[37] William A. Smith, *Lectures on the Philosophy and Practice of Slavery* (Nashville, Tenn., 1856).

[38] George Fitzhugh, "Professor Smith at Bowling Green," in *Daily Richmond Enquirer*, August 21, 1856; *id.*, "Philosophy and Practice of Slavery," *ibid.*, October 30, 1856.

thetic Conway as "religious propaganda" for slavery. Stringfellow not only developed the minutiae of Biblical arguments for slavery, but also examined the census reports for evidences of New England's infidelity as revealed by the figures regarding churches. He estimated that New England's 4,607 churches, built at a cost of nearly twenty million dollars, accommodated but 1,893,450 people, while the 8,081 churches of the Southern states, valued at slightly over eleven million dollars, held 2,896,472 people.

It was significant, he thought, that New England, which had been settled by Puritans noted for religious orthodoxy, should be the mother of the isms while the South, which received its cultural tone from the Cavaliers, indifferent in religious matters, should have become the citadel of orthodoxy. Slavery, therefore, far from being contrary to Bible Christianity, was the auxiliary of an orthodox community.[39] In his last work on the subject, *Slavery: Its Origin, Nature, and History,* Dr. Stringfellow defended the institution on the universal principle of human interdependence as revealed in the relations of children to parents, and the individual to the state, as well as slave to master.[40]

Another churchman who contributed heavily to the Bible defenses of slavery against Northern theologians was the Reverend Dr. George D. Armstrong, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Norfolk, Virginia. Dr. Armstrong's book, *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery,* received wide circulation, although it had little to add to Stringfellow's arguments. Slavery, far from being a sin, he contended, was universal in Biblical times. All the books of the New Testament were written in slaveholding states and originally addressed to persons and churches in such states. The epistle to Philemon was addressed to a slaveholder. Other argu-

[39] Thornton Stringfellow, "The Bible Argument: Our Slavery in the Light of Divine Revelation," in Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King,* 463–528.

[40] Thornton Stringfellow, *Slavery: Its Origins, Nature, and History* (Alexandria, Va., 1860), 3.

ments were the familiar ones regarding the attitude of the apostle Paul towards slavery and the patriarchal tradition favorable to this institution.[41]

Edmund Ruffin, whose agricultural experiments had helped to revive Virginia's energies, devoted considerable attention to the proslavery school, particularly the works of Dew, Fitzhugh, Stringfellow, and Armstrong. His own contributions in this field attempted to support the economic advantages of slavery over free labor. He sought arguments for the perpetuation of Negro bondage, using what he considered to be proofs of the inherent inferiority of the black and the failure of emancipation in Haiti and the British possessions.[42]

These militants were among a legion of proslavery writers who sought advanced ground for their cause during the 1850's. There was the scholar, Muscoe R. H. Garnett, nephew of Senator Hunter, whose attack on liberalism included an indictment of the free school system as well. Slavery and federalism, he contended, had always existed wherever mental energy had been most intense and wherever the greatest literature had been produced.[43] Prominent in state politics as well as a slavery defender was the fiery John Moncure Daniel of the Richmond *Examiner*, whose extremism gave ammunition to the abolitionists and once caused his arrest for libel. The offending statement had included the advice that it was a good assumption for Southerners who wished to avoid difficulties that "every man who crosses Mason's and Dixon's Line is a swindler and rogue until he has given proof to the contrary." [44] He considered the fact of New England's wealth despite her

[41] George D. Armstrong, *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery* (New York, 1857), 9–33.

[42] Edmund Ruffin, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (n.p., n.d.); *id.*, "Equality of the Races—Haytien and British Experiments," in *De Bow's Review*, XXV (1858), 36.

[43] Fredericksburg *News*, October 11, 1850; *Southern Literary Messenger*, XVI (1850), 639.

[44] Fredericksburg *News*, June 24, 1851.

poor soil as an evidence of the parasitic nature of her commerce.[45]

Among other slavery militants in the state were Dr. Beverly R. Wellford, president of the American Medical Association, a pamphleteer; Edward A. Pollard, author of the proslavery work *Black Diamonds,* and later "fire-eating" editor of the Richmond *Examiner;* Robert Baylor Semple, extremist editor of the Fredericksburg *News* until 1853; Elwood Fisher, a prominent lawyer, who sang the romantic praises of Cavalier Virginia; and a host of other university professors, lawyers, journalists, and politicians. The significant work of George Frederick Holmes of the University of Virginia must be considered in another connection for its relationship to Fitzhugh. The latter insisted that he and his friends; Holmes and Robert W. Hughes of the Richmond *Examiner,* had wrought a revolution in the thought of the South. No longer did Southern writers apologize for slavery, he wrote in 1855, because these Virginians had demonstrated the normal and universal character of the institution.[46]

The Virginia militants were to furnish a sympathetic milieu for Fitzhugh's higher ground theories. Together they gave the *coup de grâce* to Jeffersonianism and reconstructed the powerful defenses of conservatism. As the spokesmen of liberal Virginia became silent during the fifties, Young Virginia stepped into the breach as the true representative of the social order. The national sentiments of Jefferson's day were to be submerged by the new regionalism of the militants.

[45] *Ibid.,* October 22, 1850.
[46] Fitzhugh to Holmes, March 27, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

Chapter IV

THE PAMPHLETEER

In 1849 Fitzhugh attained his forty-third year, scarcely known beyond the confines of the Rappahannock Valley except for some scattered associates among the state Democrats. His literary efforts hardly went further than preparing intermittent legal briefs and documents, and the writing of occasional resolutions for the Democratic Association of Caroline County. The sectional crises of the late forties and the political convulsions in Europe of 1848–1849 now turned his thoughts along new lines. During the preceding five years he had explained a new theory to his friends at Port Royal that "slavery, *black or white*, was right and necessary"; and several times he contributed brief essays on this subject to the Fredericksburg *Democratic Recorder* and the Richmond *Examiner*, usually writing anonymously. By 1849 he had decided to follow the familiar practice of presenting his ideas through an unsigned pamphlet, *Slavery Justified, by a Southerner*, a poorly printed, twelve-page article in small type, intended, he explained, for a few friends.[1]

Fitzhugh's pamphlet was inspired by a renewed wave of national discussion on the slavery issue, especially acute in Virginia. Those who would not subscribe to the doctrine of slavery as a blessing found themselves subjected to journalistic abuse. The appeal of Dr. Henry Ruffner, president of Washington College, to the people of western Virginia against the evil economic and social influences of slavery

[1] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South*, 225.

aroused the ire of the tidewater press. The Fredericksburg *News* noted with indignation that it had received thirty newspaper exchanges from the North expressing gratification over both Ruffner's sentiments and his support by the Norfolk (Va.) *Herald.*[2] A rumor that certain tidewater slaveholders were teaching their slaves to read brought a warning from the Fredericksburg *News* that such education was contrary to Virginia law. The individuals concerned, however, quickly explained that the teaching was merely oral.[3]

During these years arose frequent controversies over the attendance of Southern youth at Northern colleges, the boycotting of goods from the North, and the banning of certain textbooks permeated with abolitionist doctrines. The Richmond *Republican and General Advertiser* offered a formula in 1849 for the defense of Southern rights:

> . . . by depending upon our own industry; by employing our own mechanics; by educating our children in our own schools; by manufacturing for ourselves; by building railroads and canals; and laying the foundation of a direct trade with Europe.[4]

A fresh infiltration of Northern immigrants with abolitionist views into the abandoned lands of tidewater Virginia, such as those of Prince William County, added more fuel to the controversy.

But it was even more the European scene and the radical movements in the North which occupied Fitzhugh's attention in *Slavery Justified.* The national workshops of Louis Blanc in France during the February Days afforded an experiment in socialism which Fitzhugh regarded as a reaction to disintegrating free society. Likewise, the experiments of Fourier and his followers in establishing communistic phalansteries in Europe and America seemed to confirm this belief. Fitzhugh took particular delight in

[2] Fredericksburg *News,* December 6, 1847.
[3] *Ibid.,* November 11, December 23, 1847.
[4] Richmond *Republican and General Advertiser,* July 23, 1849.

quoting Proudhon's anarchistic utterance, "Property is theft!" as evidence of a universal liberal assault on the institution of property in every form, of which slavery was no negligible element.

Fitzhugh saw the same spirit of subversive individualism in the antirent riots of the forties in New York where determined farmers fought the feudal leasehold system maintained by the large landowners to secure yearly tribute in produce, labor, or money. Very striking also to the Southerner was the extreme radicalism of the Oneida Colony which practiced literally the concepts of perfectionism and primitive communism, with the additional elements of sexual promiscuity, birth control, and eugenic breeding. On the same level of irresponsibility he placed the fad of spiritualism introduced by the sensational spirit rappings of the Fox sisters of New York during the late forties. Finally, in a similar category for him belonged "Bloomerism," which appeared at the forefront of the women's rights cause, and the Homestead movement, the Westerner's agitation for cheap or free public lands.

The subtitle of the essay, a virtual outline, was "Liberty and Equality—Socialism—Young England—Domestic Slavery." He began in his usual sweeping manner:

> Liberty and Equality are new things under the sun. The free states of antiquity abounded with slaves. The feudal system that supplanted Roman institutions changed the form of slavery, but brought with it neither liberty or equality. France and the Northern States of our Union have alone fully and fairly tried the experiment of a social organization founded upon universal liberty and equality of rights.[5]

Anticipating the late nineteenth century school of social Darwinists, he defined liberty as a form of free competition between the strong and the weak. Just as in the plant world this conflict did not result in the betterment

[5] [Fitzhugh], *Slavery Justified.*

of the species in his judgment, so among human beings no appreciable improvement of man had resulted in a thousand years. Men had constructed governments to modify this fruitless battle and no tribe had been found so savage as to be without government. The "War of Wits" encouraged by free competition was quite as oppressive as war by the sword or by means of private robbery or murder. Just as in the brute order of creation "might makes right," so human liberty adapted this slogan to man. "The struggle to better one's condition, to pull others down or supplant them, is the great organic law of free society," he wrote. "None but the selfish virtues are encouraged, because none other aid a man in the race of free competition." The good man in this case would be "prudent, cautious, and cunning"; the bad individual, "rash, hasty, and unskillful."

Attacking Manchester economics, Fitzhugh asserted that the burden of laissez faire fell upon society's weakest members, the laboring class. "The employer cheapens their wages, and the retail dealer takes advantage of their ignorance, their inability to visit other markets, and their want of credit, to charge them enormous profits." Labor, creating all things, was "the muzzled ox that treadeth out the straw." Alluding to the terrible ravages of the Irish potato blight of 1846, he said:

> A half million died of hunger in one year in Ireland—they died because in the eye of the law they were the equals, and liberty had made them the enemies of, their landlords and employers. Had they been vassals or serfs, they would have been beloved, cherished and taken care of by these same landlords and employers.

Fitzhugh liked to direct his barbs against the commercial middle class whom he recognized as the creators of liberalism. These men of property were masters of the poor but without the sympathies of the master since they

hired and fired freely. The middle class might behead Charles Stuart and Louis Capet for asserting "a divine right to govern wrong," yet they clad their property rights with divine sanction to the detriment of the rest of society. In a particularly strong passage he berated the capitalist spirit:

> The vulgar landlords, capitalists and employers of today have the liberties and lives of the people more completely in their hands than had the kings, barons and gentlemen of former times; and they hate and oppress the people as cordially as the people despise them. But these vulgar pervenus [*sic*], these psalm-singing regicides, these worshippers of mammon, "have but taught bloody instruction," which being taught, return to plague the inventor.

Property rights like the kingship constituted a trust permitted to the individual for the sake of society at large which would benefit from the wise administration of these rights. Failure to execute this trust justly meant forfeiture of it. "You can't make commons and forests of your lands and starve mankind; you must manage your lands to produce the most food and raiment for mankind, or you forfeit your title."

The absence of hereditary distinctions in free society meant a bewildering rapidity of social changes with rich and poor alternating, and from this came a general sense of insecurity and unhappiness. To offset such insecurity, he recommended an extension of the feudal principles of entail and primogeniture. These institutions, he admitted, "are as odious to us as kings were to the Romans, but their object—to keep property in our families—is as dear to us as to any people on earth, because we love our families as much." He saw some suggestion of these principles in such contemporary legislation as that of Iowa and Wisconsin, exempting small amounts of personal property from liability to debt and the tendency of certain legisla-

tures and courts to secure the property rights of married women. A new species of entail, based on the desire to keep property in a family, had arisen as a result of the "ruin of thousands upon thousands of families in the revulsion of 1837."

The remedy for society was "to identify the interests of the weak and the strong, the poor and the rich." Such a result was best accomplished by domestic slavery or in part by feudalism, in so far as feudal institutions retained the features of slavery. How far Fitzhugh was willing to go in transforming free society he did not say, for he was not primarily interested in its reform, but rather in demonstrating its inferiority to chattel slavery. He did point out, however, that the population of the North was too dense for Negro slavery; and white men were not fitted for such slavery even if they submitted to this relationship—a curious inconsistency for Fitzhugh, who exalted slavery regardless of color in classical times. "To the European," he wrote, "some degree of liberty is necessary, though famine stare them in the face." He concluded pessimistically that European immigration, like the locusts of ancient Egypt, would ultimately consume the substance of Northern resources.

As for the Socialists who joined in a common denunciation of free society, they too had failed. After the February Revolution of 1848 the French Provisional government attempted to find employment for the masses by putting the laborers of Paris to work transplanting trees and digging ditches. Fitzhugh wrote caustically:

> This experiment worked admirably in all but one respect. The government could find employment, but could not find wages. *The Right to Employment!* Frenchmen deluged Paris with fraternal gore to vindicate this right. The right to live when you are strong enough to work, for it is then only you want employment. Poor as this boon would be, it is one which Liberty and Equality cannot confer.

The threat of further social revolution in Europe and the North would, he hoped, end the "intermeddling of foreign pseudo-philanthropists" in the institutions of the South.

The Southern plantation system, he contended, was not only free of the evils of liberal societies but it was even "the beau ideal of communism" without its impractical features. The slave was always certain of support, for should his master fail, he would be transferred by sale and "participate in the profits of another concern." He could marry at will without worry for future security and was taken care of in sickness as well as in health. So thoroughly did the slave identify his interests with those of his master that he commonly boasted of "our crops, horses, fields and cattle."

He drew a glowing picture of the prosperity of tidewater Virginia during the past fifteen years, noting that crops had doubled, land and homes had improved, while population had remained stationary. "We have enough for the present, and no Malthusian spectres frightening us for the future." Wealth was better distributed in the South which lacked the extreme contrast of millionaire and pauper as in the North. The South had its poor, he admitted, but none who were overworked or underfed. Land was plentiful and the crowded cities of the North virtually unknown. "Our society exhibits no appearance of precocity, no symptoms of decay."

Slavery Justified received a limited circulation, being largely confined to eastern Virginia where several newspapers gave it lengthy notices. The Fredericksburg *News,* a Whig paper, not to be outdone by the *Democratic Recorder* of that city, which had originally published the complete essay in its columns, gave Fitzhugh a lengthy review. Semple, the editor, prefaced his comments by pointing out that the worst enemies of the South were those who admitted slavery to be an evil and were "ever whin-

ing out excuses for its existence"; second in danger to the South was that portion of the Southern press which treated slavery as a curse, though an incurable one, and based their protests against abolitionist interference on so lukewarm a position. "Slavery has to be justified, or it must cease to exist. . . . We want no such faint-hearted men as champions of the South," he declared.[6]

Semple had already heralded the publication of *Slavery Justified* in May, 1850, when it appeared in the columns of the *Recorder*. On that occasion he had written, "It is a production of much more than ordinary merit, and will place the author upon a high elevation as a vigorous and reflecting writer." [7] In the fuller review published in September, he praised the pamphlet as being "rich with thought and abounds with profound philosophical speculations. The style is rather loose but terse and piquant." [8] He found it stronger in logical analysis rather than notable for well-rounded periods.

One seeks vainly for review notices of *Slavery Justified* in such major journals of the South as the *Southern Literary Messenger, De Bow's Review,* and the *Southern Quarterly Review*. Fitzhugh apparently confined the pamphlet to his "few friends," at this time, although he republished it in 1854 as an appendix to his *Sociology for the South*. However uninfluential the essay appeared to be beyond the tidewater valleys, it nevertheless is of germinal importance in the history of Fitzhugh's thought, for the ideas expressed in 1849–1850 became much of his intellectual stock in trade.

A tense racial issue of the fifties arising from the anomalous position of the free Negro within a slaveholding society suggested the subject of Fitzhugh's second pamphlet, "What Shall Be Done With the Free Negroes?" This appeared originally on May 2, 1851, in the pages of the

[6] Fredericksburg *News*, September 24, 1850.
[7] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1850. [8] *Ibid.*, September 24, 1850.

Richmond *Examiner,* then edited by the "fire-eating" John Moncure Daniel; it was prepared during the deliberations of the Virginia constitutional convention of 1851 while speculation was rife as to what action should be taken regarding emancipated blacks.[9] Many tidewater Virginians at this time looked upon slavery as a satisfactory solution to an otherwise troublesome race problem, and they tended to attribute to the free Negro not only a strong nuisance element, but also an incendiary influence among slaves. The Fredericksburg *Democratic Recorder,* to which Fitzhugh contributed occasionally, proposed that the legislature repeal all laws permitting emancipated slaves to remain in Virginia and predicted ominously that "there is a day yet to come, on which we must surrender this beloved commonwealth to the free negroes or exterminate them with the sword." [10]

In Virginia, even more than in the rest of the South, the liberal Revolutionary tradition together with the decline in slave prices had initiated a strong wave of private manumissions. John Randolph freed nearly four hundred slaves in 1833, and a host of lesser slaveholders had followed a similar course, releasing over one hundred thousand slaves by 1861.[11] Before the adoption of the constitution of 1851, Virginia courts and the legislature had given generous assistance to the cause of freedom. The number of free Negroes rose from 20,124 in 1800 to 54,333 a half century later, while the white population rose from 514,280 to 894,800, a less than proportionate advance for the latter.[12]

The Southern fear of slave insurrections existed in Virginia in a particularly intense form. Gabriel's insurrec-

[9] The article is signed "G. F." It appears in a revised form in an appendix to *Sociology for the South,* 259–91.

[10] Fredericksburg *News,* November 27, 1849.

[11] James C. Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia* (Baltimore, 1902), 144.

[12] James D. B. De Bow (ed.), *Statistical View of the United States: Census of 1850* (Washington, 1854), 46–47.

tion plot of 1800 had been followed by an elaborate African colonization plan, but it soon became clear that the current projects for eliminating the Negro from American life were hopeless.[13] As the economic revival, led by developments in the world demand for raw materials, made the labor shortage acute, the combination of fear and self-interest militated against the liberal tradition. Virginia hastened to pile up disabilities upon both slave and free Negro, prohibiting assemblages, Negro preaching, the bearing of arms, and the unregulated sale of liquor. In some localities the restrictions went much further. The press of the state in August, 1850, gave considerable publicity to an insurrection plot of some four hundred slaves in Lowndes County, Alabama, which had terminated in the killing of a score of Negroes at an alleged rendezvous of conspirators.[14] At the Virginia Military Institute about six hundred Negroes were reported on January 4, 1851, to be involved in a plot to seize the college arsenal, preparatory to an assault on the town of Lexington. Elaborate military precautions were taken by the Institute, including the grouping of artillery pieces; but nothing transpired.[15] Something of this psychology of fear arising from such recurrent reports, which gripped many Virginians of the fifties, has been vividly described by a local resident, Moncure D. Conway of Falmouth:

I have seen the pallor which a whisper can bring upon the cheeks of hundreds. I know that a casual rumour has again and again deprived whole towns of a week's sleep. Negro insurrection is the name for every horror, simply because it is one of which the Southerners know nothing. . . . The present generation has seen nothing of the kind. That is the very reason why there is such a horror and panic about it: it is a vague, mysterious, and unknown evil.[16]

[13] See Harvey Wish, "American Slave Insurrections before 1861," in *Journal of Negro History* (Washington), XXII (1937), 299–320.

[14] Fredericksburg *News*, August 27, 1850. [15] *Ibid.*, January 10, 1851.

[16] Conway (ed.), *Addresses and Reprints*, 93.

Fitzhugh's own village of Port Royal, and Caroline County as a whole, regarded the free Negro issue as the "uppermost in the future of Caroline" during 1850. As far back as 1816 the town had petitioned the legislature for the privilege of incorporation in order to deal effectively with the large numbers of free Negroes whose hogs, running at large in the town, created a major nuisance.[17] In 1850 the Port Royal Negroes were encouraged to build their own church rather than to continue attendance at the Enon Baptist Church.[18] That year a free Negro, who was commonly believed to be guilty of various misdemeanors, was attacked by a mob of "respectable citizens" and driven out of Caroline County. "In such cases," dryly remarked Semple of the Fredericksburg *News,* "there is not much to condemn in Judge Lynch." [19]

This turbulent background is the key to the extreme suggestions offered by Fitzhugh's essay on the free Negro. Borrowing heavily from Carlyle's *Latter Day Pamphlets,* he argued that emancipation, a "short-sighted philanthropy," had forced civilized nations to lose half of their food supply. "In the West Indian dominions of France and England, all industry is paralyzed and the most fertile islands in the world threaten soon to become desert wastes, infested with lawless savages." The atmosphere was surcharged with the possibilities of another Santo Domingo massacre; appalling human suffering, he predicted, would come out of West Indian emancipation.

[17] "Abstract of Caroline County Legislative Petition, 6820, December 9, 1816," in Wingfield, *History of Caroline County,* 59.

[18] *Ibid.,* 168.

[19] Fredericksburg *News,* November 29, 1850. One contributor on the free Negro question demanded bitterly, "The question then arises who supports this band of luxuriant Idlers, this body of sloth, this spring of corruption, these sad levellers of the poor white man?" *Ibid.,* December 17, 1850. Frederick L. Olmsted, a sympathetic observer, noted the boating, oystering, and idleness of Virginia's free Negroes, and concluded that their poverty was not due to a lack of industrial opportunity. *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (New York, 1856), 126.

In the United States, both North and South, the position of the free Negro, he declared, was rapidly becoming worse as he was driven from pillar to post by racial antipathies. Fitzhugh, whose regular reading of Northern newspapers made him fully aware of Negro persecution above Mason and Dixon's Line, attributed the brutalities of Northern mobs to abolitionist attempts to teach the Negro social equality. With the instinct of the propagandist, Fitzhugh dwelt upon the pariah status of the Negro in the North:

> Illinois and California will not permit him to enter their dominions. Ohio places him under severe conditions, and is now moving to expel him altogether; and Virginia also proposes to send him back to Africa. Mobs in our Northern cities drive him from his home and hunt him like a wild beast.

Fitzhugh expressed his regret that there were thousands of Southerners who, while believing slavery a blessing to the Negro, considered the latter a curse to the country. However, this attitude appeared to be changing as the South's agricultural surplus grew larger than that of "any people in the world" and the elevation of the white man from menial services became manifest. On the other hand, the Northern white laborer so dreaded the competition of the Negro that he was using his political power to exclude him. Since California had forbidden Negro immigration, bond or free, it became obvious, said Fitzhugh, that the Wilmot Proviso was actually directed against the Negro race.[20]

He drew a dark picture of the free Negroes as an "intolerable nuisance" blighting the prosperity of every village or neighborhood in which they settled. "They are thieves from necessity, for nature has made them so improvident they cannot in health provide for sickness, in

[20] A partial substantiation of Fitzhugh's charges regarding contemporary Northern persecution of the free Negro appears in Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1918), 439 ff.

youth for old age, nor in summer for winter." Although Fitzhugh did not subscribe as yet to the racialism of Nott and Van Evrie, his opinion of the Negro's mental and social qualities was only slightly higher than theirs. "It is our daily boast," he wrote, "and experience verifies it, that the Anglo-Saxons of America are the only people in the world fitted for freedom." No people could exist in free competition with this race. "From the days of Hengist and Horsa to those of Houston, the same adventurous, rapacious, exterminating spirit has characterized the race." Hence arose the necessity of the master-slave relationship to protect the Negro from the fate of extermination suffered by the Indian.

As to the form of enslavement for the free Negro, Fitzhugh did not think it essential to prescribe details, although he preferred a regime of peonage along Mexican lines, which seemed to be the mildest type of coercive labor system. His first plan was a voluntary one. The free Negro, who now received less than half the yearly hire of slaves because of the uncertainty of his tenure, would be offered the more profitable privilege of contracting for his service on an indenture basis. Should this plan fail, the state authorities would be empowered to hire out all Negroes who did not earn enough property to support themselves. A portion of their earnings would be set aside as a general welfare fund to support their children, the aged, and the infirm. All others would be sent to Africa. "If experience showed that nothing short of absolute slavery would meet the exigencies of the case, then give them a year's notice to quit the State, or to be sold into unconditional slavery."

Fitzhugh's first proposal is striking in its resemblance to the system of Negro peonage adopted by the South during Reconstruction days and even long afterwards. It had the merit of being far more humane than the majority of popular solutions in Virginia and elsewhere for the race

and labor problems; most of these plans insisted on the unconditional expulsion of the Negro from the state. The proposal to re-enslave the free Negro was the first choice of an appreciable number of Southern newspapers.

Turning upon the liberals whom he expected to oppose any solution based on concessions to slavery, he explained that their great argument for human liberty was "borrowed from the arithmetic." They reasoned that since free labor was more productive than slave labor, it was cheaper to hire the laborer when he was needed and to turn him out afterwards than to purchase a slave who required support in and out of season and during the unproductive years of his life. "Since the slave trade is abolished," Fitzhugh remarked caustically, "which was a lucrative and favorite pursuit of the Yankees and English, those gentry have from the above interested calculations, turned abolitionists." Likewise, he pointed out, Southerners, finding Negroes "expensive and useless" at the time of the Revolution, became antislavery men. Frankly accepting an explanation of slavery derived from economic determinism, he said flatly:

> We, their wiser sons, having learned to make cotton and sugar, find slavery very useful and profitable, and think it a most excellent institution. We of the South advocate slavery, no doubt, from just as selfish motives as induce the Yankees and English to deprecate it. We have however almost all human and divine authority on our side of the argument.

The Negro must always occupy a position of inferiority to the white man, North and South, he argued, or the consequences might easily be violence. "If legislative action be delayed, the people in their primary capacity, in vulgar parlance, mobs, will take the case in hand." In one Virginia county, he noted, the free Negroes had been given notice to quit. "Quit! and go where? To be turned out and hunted like the bagged fox." Negroes required

masters in one form or another in civilized societies. The free Negroes of Haiti, he pointed out, were well governed under Toussaint L'Ouverture but this meant strict military surveillance, compulsory labor, and severe penalties for deserting their farms. Britain's experiments in emancipation at Sierra Leone seemed to him, from reports of numerous deaths, to be "worse than slavery." Cleverly he reasoned that if slavery were a blessing, as Southerners now held, colonization experiments for Virginia were illogical. Lest he be accused of hostility to freedom itself as an ideal, he added:

> We admire and love liberty, coupled with happiness, as much as any one . . . but of cold, shivering, naked, houseless, starving liberty, the liberty of the prodigal son and the free negro, we entertain much the same opinion that Falstaff did of honor. . . .

Using the word liberty in a broad sociological sense, he argued that it receded with civilization. Unlike Rousseau's pessimistic treatment of this theme, Fitzhugh's theory regarded the cumulative restrictions of liberty by civilization as a positive good. Russian Cossacks might be a thousand times more free than enlightened New Yorkers, but the former were comparative savages. Among the restraints surrounding the cosmopolitan citizen were governmental laws, church proscriptions, the dictates of fashion, the necessities of livelihood, and the social controls of clubs and Masonic societies. "Does such a man enjoy one moment of liberty?" he asked. Whites had always been civilized, he asserted, disregarding accessible information to the contrary, but Negroes never, so long as they lived in Africa. The slave dealer of that continent, then, not the missionary, had been the main civilizing force for the Negro.

Fitzhugh's second pamphlet, like the first, received the lone plaudits of several eastern Virginia newspapers. The

Democratic Recorder and the *News* of Fredericksburg as well as the Richmond *Examiner* gave him cordial support. The *News* editorialized that Fitzhugh had solved the problem of the free Negro better than any one else:

> He has given us an essay abounding with learning and conclusive in reasoning. The style is perspicuous and occasionally eloquent. . . . We conceive it the ablest review we have yet seen. We should be pleased to see this pamphlet in the hands of every man in the land when corrected. There are typographical errors which in some instances affect the sense. It is badly gotten up and ought to be reprinted.[21]

Ultimately, this essay like *Slavery Justified* was to be included in Fitzhugh's magnum opus, *Sociology for the South.*

Whether Fitzhugh's essay influenced the new state constitution of Virginia is not clear, but entirely possible, for certain of its provisions regarding the free Negro are similar to his proposals. All future emancipated slaves were to forfeit their freedom by remaining in the state twelve months after manumission. The General Assembly was forbidden to pass any act of emancipation, being empowered only to legislate for the solution of the free Negro question by removal or otherwise.[22]

Amidst similar action taken by various tidewater communities concerning the free Negro, the citizens of Caroline County assembled at Bowling Green on June 14, 1852, to adopt resolutions for the control of the race problem. George Fitzhugh, now the leading authority upon the subject, addressed the gathering and drew up a lengthy philosophical petition to the legislature embodying the main ideas he had expressed in his recent essay. The preamble was followed by several resolutions, prepared by Fitzhugh and a committee of twenty citizens.

21 Fredericksburg *News,* April 4, 1851.

22 *New Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, July 3, 1851* (Richmond, 1851).

The first resolution suggests another authorship than Fitzhugh's for it approved a legislative bill, then pending, which provided for the creation of a fund for the removal of free Negroes from Virginia, the money to be derived from sums obtained by hiring them out. Another resolution, taken almost verbatim from his essay, requested that the Negroes "be subjected to some form, degree, or modification of slavery." The most humane course, it was stated, was to "enslave and protect" them, for otherwise the Negroes would "disturb society and ruin themselves by their vices and improvidence." All free Negro children should be bound to reputable whites and separated "from the evil influence and example of their idle and vicious parents." Justification for these harsh measures—all of which cannot be attributed solely to Fitzhugh—was allegedly found in the parallel course followed by many Northern states where the provocation to the white community was considered to be infinitely less than in the South. Finally, it was recommended "in deference to the prejudices of mankind" that free Negro emigration be assisted by the State.[23]

Disqualifying laws regarding the status of the Negro, both slave and free, soon followed at Richmond. The legislation of 1855–1856 opened a way for the re-enslavement of the freedman by a system of petition, along feudal lines.[24] Local communities, inspired by an articulate public opinion, lent effectiveness to the various attempts to degrade the position of the Negro. Towards this result Fitzhugh's essay undoubtedly contributed.

[23] Fredericksburg *News*, July 1, 1852. The *News* editorialized on "Negro Insubordination" amidst the news of fresh clashes between the races at Richmond, Powhatan, and Fredericksburg. "We have seen on our streets the negro impudently promenading, sometimes jostling the white man by neglect to give the pavement, and on Sabbath evenings airing in hacks, buggies and on horseback." *Ibid.*, July 26, August 5, 1852.

[24] Ballagh, *History of Slavery in Virginia*, 144.

Chapter V

LITERARY APPRENTICESHIP—CARLYLIANISM

THE early fifties were years of intense reading for Fitzhugh as well as of writing minor experimental essays in defense of the Southern social order. His basic techniques of propaganda had already crystallized, but he sought fresh illustrations for his offensive against liberalism. Like many Southern patriots of the time, he turned eagerly to Thomas Carlyle, then at the height of his reputation in the literary world, whose *Latter-Day Pamphlets* infused new life into proslavery militancy by its merciless assaults upon Exeter Hall—the symbol of hypocritical government experiments in abolition and other misguided philanthropies.

More vigorous intellects than Fitzhugh's had already succumbed to Carlyle's magnetic appeal, among them Disraeli and John Stuart Mill. American readers, thanks in part to Ralph Waldo Emerson, were sufficiently awed by Carlyle to betray an extreme sensitiveness to his criticisms. One prominent pro-Southern editor for example, John Mitchell, delivered an address in 1854 before the University of Virginia which might easily have been a rendition of Carlyle's famous essay, "The Present Age" (1843), with its stock references to Exeter Hall's cant and the familiar gospel of work.[1] It is important, therefore, to review briefly Carlyle's writings in their relation to the Southern scene.

In *Latter-Day Pamphlets,* prepared originally in 1849,

[1] Fredericksburg *News,* July 13, 1854.

Carlyle drew attention to the ultimate importance of the events which were transpiring in Europe during the revolutionary days of 1848–1849. Even fools, he wrote, were compelled to ask the meaning of this endless calamity and confusion. The February Revolution in France had been the explosion setting off the entire powder barrel of Europe. "Everywhere immeasurable Democracy rose monstrous, loud, blatant, inarticulate as the voice of Chaos." The "holy-of-holies" of tradition "was scandalously laid bare to dogs and the profane." Instead of kings there were public orators "haranguing on barrel-head" or being "aggregated into a National Parliament to harangue." [2]

Were things better in America? Carlyle thought not, and expressed himself in terms so positive as to antagonize American readers. Agreeing with the unfriendly judgment by numerous English travelers in the United States such as Charles Dickens, he echoed the caustic evaluation made familiar during the recent War of the Quarterlies against the pushing, blatant, materialistic spirit of the rich and powerful republic overseas. "My friend," he wrote, "brag not yet of our American cousins! Their quantity of cotton, dollars, industry and resources, I believe to be almost unspeakable, but I can by no means worship the like of these." He saw no evidence of the success of democracy in the Americans—to him, eighteen million of the greatest bores ever seen in history—who sat idly "*caucusing* and ballot-boxing on the graves of their heroic ancestors, saying, 'It is well, it is well!' " With his unusual felicity of phrase Carlyle coined an expression which delighted Fitzhugh: so-called liberal government, as in America, was "Anarchy plus a street constable."

The new superficial spirit of laissez faire had dispensed with governing, he wrote. Supply and demand, the cash nexus between man and man, had replaced the traditional

[2] Thomas Carlyle, "The Present Age," in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (London, 1850), 2.

relations. In social life the new order had raised divorce to the status of a sacrament and emancipation followed as a matter of course.

> Cut every human relation which has anywhere grown uneasy sheer asunder; reduce whatsoever was compulsory to voluntary, whatsoever was permanent among us to the condition of nomadic:—in other words, loosen by assiduous wedges in every joint, the whole fabric of social existence, stone from stone: till at last, all now being loose enough, it can, as we already see in most countries, be overset by sudden outburst of revolutionary rage; and, lying as mere mountains of anarchic rubbish, solicit you to sing Fraternity, etc. over it, and to rejoice in the new remarkable era of human progress we have arrived at.[3]

This particular passage from "The Present Age" became the text of Fitzhugh's *Cannibals All!* where it was cited at much greater length.

"British Liberty," Carlyle charged, "shuddering to interfere with the rights of capital, takes six or eight millions of money annually to feed the idle laborer whom it dare not employ." Hence liberty came to mean starvation. Likewise, British charity encouraged idleness among such necessary domestic workers as the needlewomen with their "deepish appetite for beer and viands." Carlyle saved his best barbs for the liberty preached by classical economists with their shibboleths of "private enterprise," "rights of capital," and the "voluntary principle." His characterization of economics as the "dismal science," representing a harsh social outlook, was to outlive his generation. For the "divine message" of the professors of economics with their "laws of the shop-till," he expressed infinite contempt. This attitude, particularly, found a responsive chord in Fitzhugh's mind and was to lead to the accusation that the Virginian was waging war upon a useful science.

Against the pseudo philanthropy which led to idleness,

[3] *Ibid.*, 30.

starvation, and crime, Carlyle offered his gospel of work in its most coercive form. For his "indigent, incompetent friends," numerous during the Hungry Forties, he presented the prospect of an intelligent British prime minister—an imaginary one—leading the unemployed to work in the Irish bogs and the "vacant desolations of Connaught now falling into Cannibalism." His model prime minister would say to these men:

> Here is work for you; strike into it with manlike, soldier-like obedience and heartiness, according to the methods here prescribed,—wages follow for you without difficulty. . . . Refuse to strike into it; shirk the heavy labour, disobey the rules,—I will admonish and endeavor to incite you; if in vain, I will flog you; if still in vain, I will at last shoot you,—and make God's Earth, and the forlorn-hope in God's Battle, free of you.[4]

Other essays struck the same note of "misguided philanthropy," finding particularly bitter expression in "Model Prisons," a condemnation of that form of charity which would begin with scoundrels rather than with honest men.[5] This essay became the frequent subject of Fitzhugh's later writings and furnished him with many a fruitful theme. Among Carlyle's expressions and ideas appropriated by Fitzhugh from this and other pamphlets were the association of "Mammonism" with the new industrial capitalist class, the strictures on the new "age of unbelief," and particularly the idea that unemployed men, adrift in the competitive world of Manchester Liberalism, were "slaves without masters," sunk into a species of cannibalism. This last suggestion was to provide both title and subtitle, as well as much of the text of Fitzhugh's second book, *Cannibals All!*

Especially valuable as propaganda material to Fitzhugh and the proslavery school were Carlyle's attacks on the West Indian experiment of emancipation. In December,

[4] *Ibid.*, 54-55.

[5] *Id.*, "Model Prisons," *ibid.*, 27.

1849, the Scot had published "The Negro Question" in *Fraser's,* excoriating the results of freeing the blacks in the British Caribbean possessions. This essay brought sharp attacks even from Carlyle's friends and the publishers omitted it in the editions of *Latter-Day Pamphlets* intended for the North. In defiance Carlyle republished his essay as *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question,* which was issued in 1853. Using as a text Lord John Russell's assurance that the Negroes in the West Indies were "all happy and doing well," Carlyle poured out his vitriolic feelings upon the benevolence that wiped out twenty million dollars of property at a stroke of the pen, encouraged "Quashee" to idle up to his ears in pumpkin, and reduced the food supply of all Christendom. This, he asserted, was a typical product of the "unhappy wedlock of philanthropic liberalism and the Dismal Science," an outgrowth of a "skeptical eighteenth century." All must work or the world would grind mankind to death.

> The idle Black man in the West Indies had, not long since, the right, and will again under better form, if it please Heaven, have the right . . . to be *compelled* to work as he was fit, and to *do* the Maker's will who had constructed him with such and such capabilities, and prefigurements of capability.

In an imaginary address to the Negroes of the Caribbean, he declared:

> You are not "slaves" now; nor do I wish, if it can be avoided, to see you slaves again; but decidedly you will have to be servants to those that are born *wiser* than you, that are born lords of you, servants to the Whites, if they *are* (as what mortal can doubt they are?) born wiser than you.

In the sardonic vein of Jonathan Swift he added this barb against the philanthropic theories of Exeter Hall and the continent, practiced by a "puny race of politicians" over Western civilization:

And shall I tell you which is the one intolerable sort of slavery; the slavery over which the very gods weep? That sort is not rifest in the West Indies; but, with all its sad fruits, prevails in nobler countries. It is the slavery of the strong to the weak; of the great and noble-minded to the small and mean! The slavery of Wisdom to Folly.

Acts of Parliament, then, could not abolish chattel slavery, but merely altered its name. This broad conception of slavery as coercive labor in any of its forms became Fitzhugh's "slavery principle," universal in history and independent of law, being founded upon the immutable diversities of human beings. "Heaven's laws," wrote Carlyle, and Fitzhugh agreed, "are not repealable by Earth, however Earth may try—and it has been trying hard, in some directions, of late!" [6]

Although American journals, North and South, resented Carlyle's attacks on the American character and in many, perhaps most, instances reviewed the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* unfavorably, the proslavery militants hailed it with joy. De Bow republished in full the essay on the Negro question as it originally appeared in *Fraser's* with the comment, "When British writers can so speak, it is time for Northern fanaticism to pause and reflect." [7] The *Southern Quarterly Review* of William Gilmore Simms, an outspoken proslavery journal, editorialized:

Carlyle has offended the people of the North, since he has come out, sensibly, philosophically, and like a man, superior to cant and false philanthropy, in favour of negro slavery. . . . But the wonder is, to see so many of our Southern presses—not having read these pamphlets—actually repeating the clamours of their Yankee fileleaders—actually denouncing, in their abominable blindness, one of their best friends and champions. What

[6] *Id., Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question* (London, 1853), 11.

[7] "Carlyle on West Indian Emancipation," in *De Bow's Review*, VIII (1850), 527–38. The *Southern Literary Messenger*, a moderate journal of Richmond, denounced Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* as "monstrous." *Southern Literary Messenger*, XVI (1850), 330.

if Carlyle does sneer at the American people as a race of bores: we need not be solicitous in the defence of the Yankee part of the nation.[8]

George Frederick Holmes of Virginia, one of the foremost reviewers of the South, praised Carlyle's pamphlets in an essay for the *Southern Quarterly Review*. He agreed with Carlyle, "Political economy must not be regarded as the grand catholicon of social evils; admirable within its range, it is ruin, to body and soul, beyond it." [9]

When Conway visited his friend Carlyle during the Civil War years, he learned from Jane Welsh, the author's wife, that following the publications of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* certain unnamed "eminent Southerners" wrote their appreciation to Carlyle. They proposed—with no encouragement from the recipient—that England should restore slavery in her West Indian possessions "in which case the slave states would unite with them, and a great British Empire be formed in the New World." [10] During the war Carlyle received a visit from John R. Thompson, editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger,* motivated by the hope that the prestige of the great Scot could be utilized for the cause of the Confederacy. These Southerners misunderstood Carlyle's purpose. He had chosen to idealize slavery in the new world in order to publicize the wretched conditions of the white workers of Britain. His strategy was not unlike that of the militant defenders of slavery who portrayed the evils of modern industrialism as darkly as possible in order to present the idyllic side of slavery. Carlyle explained to Conway that he had no dislike of the Negro and did not wish for him any condition which he would not "under like circumstances" wish for himself. This explanation, however, did not preclude slavery, in Carlyle's mind, as a solution for the Negro labor problem.[11]

[8] *Southern Quarterly Review* (Charleston), XVII (1850), 509.
[9] *Ibid.*, 354. [10] Conway, *Autobiography*, I, 409. [11] *Ibid.*, 400.

Carlyle's influence upon the slavery controversy, unintentional as it was, reaped an extensive crop of articles, particularly in *De Bow's Review,* upon West Indian emancipation. His position was amplified in the London *Times* which in turn became a familiar authority for the pro-slavery writers. Another British author, influenced by Carlyle's work, was the distinguished historian and jurist, Sir Archibald Alison, whose attacks on Britain's role as a liberator of the Negro received an attentive audience in the Southern press. The propaganda of West Indian planters, both in the colonial press and in England, furnished fresh arguments to Fitzhugh and his associates for the necessity of perpetual slavery.[12]

During the spring and summer of 1854 Fitzhugh acquired an invaluable literary apprenticeship as a contributing editor to the Richmond *Examiner* which claimed the largest circulation of any newspaper in the South. Daniel's prolonged trip to Europe brought into the editorship of the *Examiner* during 1853–1857 another fiery Virginian, Robert William Hughes. Fitzhugh joined the staff in the midst of a major press war growing in part out of the sectional passions stirred up by the Kansas-Nebraska debates. Hughes appeared to be enjoying a journalistic duel with the Northern press, particularly directed against Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune,* over the Ward case. A certain Southerner, Ward, had been acquitted on a charge of shooting an abolitionist schoolmaster. Hughes had written with characteristic exaggeration:

> . . . we imagine that the propriety of shooting an abolitionist schoolmaster when caught tampering with our slaves, has never been questioned by any intelligent Southern man. This we take

[12] See, for example, the articles in *De Bow's Review,* VIII (1850), 20–22, 348–53; XIV (1853), 275; XVI (1854), 581–85; XVIII (1855), 474–96, 591–602; XX (1856), 660; XXIV (1858), 193–97. Many extracts from the British colonial press appear throughout *House Executive Documents,* 36 Cong., 2 Sess., IV.

to be the unwritten common law of the South. . . . We repeat that the shooting of itinerant abolition schoolmasters is frequently a creditable and laudable act, entitling a respectable southern man to, at least, a seat in the Legislature, or a place in the common council. Let all Yankee schoolmasters who propose invading the South, endowed with a strong nasal twang, a long scriptural name, and Webster's lexicographic book of abominations, seek some more congenial land, where their lives would be more secure than in the vile and homicidal slave states.[13]

Hughes, for all his extremism, did not go beyond an endorsement of state rights and secession in the abstract, refusing to translate these positions in terms of practical politics. Fitzhugh was able, therefore, to reconcile his own militant philosophy with the desire to keep Virginia in the Union. His numerous newspaper articles on the failures of nonslaveholding societies, usually written anonymously, became the essence of *Sociology for the South*, published in the latter part of 1854.[14] Hughes co-operated with Fitzhugh in reading the manuscript of the book as it was prepared, although not altogether agreeing with the views of the author. "We have stood on the defensive long enough," Fitzhugh asserted. "We can throw fire-brands as well as the abolitionists; and the poor in the free States are much more ready for insurrection than the slaves of the South."[15] The articles need not be considered here, for they may be reserved for the analysis of *Sociology for the South*. His essays embodied attacks on laissez faire, including free trade, the failure of Negro colonization in Africa, the exploitation of Northern immigrants, and a denunciation of Greeley, the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society, free soilism, and Northern infidelity. He appealed

[13] Quoted at length, with comments, by the New York *Daily Tribune*, May 16, 1854; Fredericksburg *News*, August 21, 1854.

[14] Among the various articles indubitably written by Fitzhugh in the Richmond *Examiner* are those of April 21, May 12, 16, 23, 26, 30, June 6, 9, 16, 20, 23, 27, 30, and September 1, 1854.

[15] *Ibid.*, June 30, 1854.

to Southern youth to learn the powerful arguments of the proslavery cause.

Fitzhugh's pamphlets had had limited circulation, but his articles for the *Examiner* attracted considerable attention in Northern as well as in Southern states. His peculiarities of style, which frequently put the worst possible construction on an otherwise plausible position, produced an impression of extremism which various antislavery elements readily accepted as typical of Southern thought.[16] He was particularly proud of the praise he received from Holmes in a letter which he showed to his friend Frederick William Coleman. The last remarked to Fitzhugh that Holmes was "the only man in the world qualified to criticize" a work on such subjects as *Sociology for the South*. Holmes received an enthusiastic acknowledgment of October 12, 1854, from Fitzhugh:

> You may well imagine the pride and pleasure with which I, an unfledged author, was filled to find that you concurred with me in my novel theories, and would probably sustain them through the press. . . . We think so much alike on the subject of Slavery and Society generally that I believe I have anticipated most of your suggestions, at least I hope so, for I concur in them all as I understand them. I hope Mr. Hughes, who will hand you this, will be able to carry you the copy of my first two chapters which pretty fairly develop my theories. My Book has in a high degree the failing of the young Lawyer. It runs over the argument too often—but the subject is difficult and in part excuses this failing.[17]

Advance notices of *Sociology for the South* appeared in both the Richmond *Examiner* and the Fredericksburg *News*. Its publication was entrusted to the prominent Richmond bookseller, Adolphus Morris, whose business included bookbinding, importing foreign books, and job

[16] Some of the quotations from the *Examiner* which are obviously from Fitzhugh's pen appear in a Northern propagandist pamphlet of Leonard Marsh, *A Bake-Pan for the Dough-faces* (Burlington, Vt., 1854).

[17] Fitzhugh to Holmes, October 12, 1854, in Holmes Letter Book.

printing. The book was to emerge in the critical early phase of the struggle over Kansas when propaganda on both sides had reached a new intensity. Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio wrote privately in 1854 to Eli Thayer that there was now "a reawakening of the northern people to the *propagandism of liberty* as an offset to the counter propagandism of Slavery by the slave States." [18] The current gubernatorial campaign in Virginia which brought victory to Henry A. Wise had been filled with national issues involving slavery at home and in the territories.[19] The stage was now set.

[18] New York *Daily Tribune,* May 29, 1854.
[19] Fredericksburg *News,* September 4, 28, 1854.

Chapter VI

THE SOCIOLOGY OF SOUTHERN NATIONALISM

FITZHUGH'S title, *Sociology for the South,* must have mystified many Southerners of 1854. Never before had an American volume borne the term sociology, a hybrid compound of Latin and Greek. Harriet Martineau's translation of the positivist works of Comte, "father of sociology," had rendered the subject as "social science" rather than sociology.[1] Yet, imperceptibly by the fifties the novel term had appeared with increasing frequency, sufficiently so for another Southerner, Henry Hughes of Mississippi, to adopt the word in his *A Treatise on Sociology,* actually a proslavery discussion, published during the same year. Subsequently "sociology" was to become familiar to the readers of *De Bow's Review* as Fitzhugh, William Grayson, and Holmes discussed the slavery question in the scientific jargon of an incipient science.

These men, together with such Northern abolitionists as Stephen Pearl Andrews of New York, shared the belief of the Enlightenment in the cult of objectivity as the solvent of social controversies.[2] Fitzhugh, particularly, insisted on many occasions that his mission was to reconcile North and South by an exclusively scientific approach. In this same spirit Andrews wrote to Fitzhugh in 1855, pro-

[1] William L. Chenery, "A Forgotten Sociologist," in *Nation* (New York), LXXXIX (1909), 457.

[2] For evidence of the influence of the slavery controversy upon American sociology, see Harvey Wish, "Stephen Pearl Andrews, Pioneer American Sociologist," in *Social Forces* (Chapel Hill), XIX (1941), 477–82.

fessing a desire to collaborate with him and Holmes in a definitive work reconciling the antagonistic principles of freedom and order:

A new philosophy, *our* new philosophy, broad enough to cover North and South, to neutralize factious demagoguism against the institutions of one section, to enlighten and liberalize all sections, to quicken lagging conservatism of the South into reform in its own way, and adopted to its own wants, and to give the reformers of the North quite enough to attend to at home.[3]

A meeting between Fitzhugh and Andrews took place in New York during March, 1855; Holmes was unable to attend. Although few tangible results came from the conference, Fitzhugh adopted and frequently quoted Andrews' arguments as to the chaos of competitive society in the North and in Europe. Despite notable eccentricities, Fitzhugh, Holmes, and Andrews came to occupy pioneer rank in the history of American sociology. Holmes, in fact, later wrote one of the first college textbooks in sociology, *The Science of Society,* a volume of lectures delivered at the University of Virginia and published in 1883.[4]

"We did not like to employ the newly-coined word Sociology," apologized Fitzhugh in his Preface. "We could, however, find none other in the whole range of the English language, that would even faintly convey the idea which we wished to express." In his study of the history of the term within the past century, he found its use coterminous with the "disease, long lurking in the system of free society" which had revealed numerous symptoms. Owen, Louis Blanc, and Fourier had arisen as doctors of

[3] Stephen P. Andrews to Fitzhugh, January 19, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

[4] Holmes's textbook appeared simultaneously with America's first important sociological work, Lester F. Ward, *Dynamic Sociology* (New York, 1883). Like Fitzhugh, Holmes clung to a paternalistic sociology which rejected liberalism and Auguste Comte's positivism. Harvey Wish, "George Frederick Holmes and the Genesis of American Sociology," in *American Journal of Sociology* (Chicago), XLVI (1941), 698–707.

society to prescribe a treatment for a disease whose existence all admitted. "The fact," he reasoned, "that before the institution of Free Society, there was no such term, and that it is not in use in slave countries, now, shows pretty clearly that Slave Society, ancient and modern, has ever been in so happy a condition, so exempt from ailments, that no doctors have arisen to treat it of its complaints, or to propose remedies for their cure." [5]

His dedication "To the People of the South" suggested the need for his section to awaken to the "revolutionary tumults, uproar, mendicity and crime of free society" and commended the work as a "zealous and honest effort to promote your peculiar interests." With disarming frankness he admitted that the book was hastily written and intentionally a brief work because "our inexperience in authorship warned us we had better await the reception of this." Another apologetic note was added for his frequent reiteration of the same arguments, a fault which he attributed to the necessity of clarifying his message.

Southerners, bred upon the axioms of free trade and regional specialization, must have felt increasing mystification upon reading Fitzhugh's early chapters arraigning not only free trade but the entire school of classical economics. Although Virginia was noted for her heretics, and hence a Southern man with Northern principles could not occasion undue surprise, the author's ardent professions of state rights and proslavery militancy indicated that he belonged to a new species of conservative, rather than to the economic nationalists of Henry Clay's school.

"Political economy," he explained, "is the science of free society." Its fundamental axioms, laissez faire and *pas trop gouverner,* were opposed to "all kinds of slavery, for they in fact assert that individuals and peoples prosper most when governed least." The history of such a science must

[5] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South,* v. All citations in this chapter are from this volume, unless otherwise indicated.

be brief for laissez faire was opposed to most historical systems such as Greek and Roman slavery, feudal serfdom, and the Catholic social order. Only with the extinction of slavery and serfdom and the coming of the Reformation did the new maxims gain currency. The Western world found itself without precedent or philosophy for its altered circumstances. Medieval authority with its monopolistic forms broke down before the new individualism. "Men were suddenly called on to walk alone, to act and work for themselves without guide, advice or control from superior authority."

Then came Adam Smith and his epoch-making *Wealth of Nations,* published in 1776. "The occasion found and made the man," wrote Fitzhugh. "For writing a one-sided philosophy, no man was better fitted than Adam Smith. He possessed extraordinary powers of abstraction, analysis and generalization. He was absent, secluded and unobservant." Smith generalized from the few examples about him of individual prosperity arising from the benefits of free competition, and offered a simple and comprehensive philosophy.

> Its leading and almost its only doctrine is, that individual well-being and social and national wealth and prosperity will be best promoted by each man's eagerly pursuing his own selfish welfare unfettered and unrestricted by legal regulations, or governmental prohibitions, farther than such regulations may be necessary to prevent positive crime.[7]

Turning upon a cardinal tenet of laissez faire, international free trade, Fitzhugh condemned the extension of competitive ruthlessness to world trade. Exclusively agricultural states were the "weak" in international dealings, facing the exploitative powers of powerful industrial countries. All trade, domestic and foreign, was a "war of the wits" in which the stronger-witted prevailed. Thus

[6] *Ibid.,* 9. [7] *Ibid.,* 11.

England by free trade became richer as her customers grew poorer.

Free trade between England and Ireland furnishes the latter an excellent market for her beef and potatoes, in exchange for English manufactures. The labor employed in manufacturing pays much better than that engaged in rearing beeves and potatoes. On the average, one hour of English labor pays for two of Irish.

Nor was this all. Ireland's preoccupation with poorly paid agriculture weakened her culturally, for the wealth, intellect, and enterprise of her citizens were attracted to industrial England with its manifest opportunities. "Thus is Ireland robbed of her very life's blood, and thus do our Northern States rob the Southern." [8] The wit of man could devise no more effectual means of impoverishing any country than to establish a system of exclusive agriculture, he believed. The large landowner of a rich agrarian region, lacking adequate satisfaction of his personal, particularly luxurious, wants at home, tended to turn absentee and spend his money abroad. "In the absence of free trade, this rich region must manufacture for itself, build cities, erect schools and colleges, and carry on all the pursuits and provide for all the common wants of civilized man."

Fitzhugh went even further. Not only was complete free trade an exploitative system, but there was considerable waste and futility in many interregional exchanges. Furs and oils were unnecessary at the South and tropical fruits appeared "tasteless and insipid" at the North. Besides, he was not at all sure but that scientific investigation would find that the productions of one climate were injurious when used in another.[9]

Economists might grimace, and many undoubtedly did, while they attempted to follow the peculiar gyrations of

[8] *Ibid.*, 14.

[9] *Ibid.*, 15–16.

Fitzhugh's reasoning, but he remained unperturbed. To him these representatives of the "dismal science" were narrow-minded and so unimaginative in their thinking that they seemed to deal with political economy as a "mere physical science," presenting man as a machine, impelled by mechanical forces. National policy was determined, according to their belief, by "measurements of time, distance, cost of transportation, capacity of soil, climate, etc." They ignored the lessons of history, particularly the story of Greece's civilization, promoted by a highly versatile economic life, and whose sterile soil proved to be an advantage rather than handicap. What was important, said Fitzhugh, was the effect of an economic system upon the civilization of any state. Mere exchange of goods never civilized any people; in fact, it degraded them unless trade was accompanied by manufacturing.[10]

As this attack upon free trade was prepared for the publisher of *Sociology for the South,* Fitzhugh wrote an open letter to Hughes of the Richmond *Examiner,* expressing his opinions in even more decided terms:

> We appear in your columns today, Mr. Editor, not to make an argument or to vindicate a theory, but to proclaim a fact. Free Trade, as a matter of faith is no more. 'Tis true, that sitting on her thrones in London and New York, she levies tribute with more than proconsular rapacity from a prostrate world. . . . But men have lost faith in her. Socialism has undermined her in Europe, and we of the South, her latest victims and votaries, are invoking protection against the North. . . . Establish non-intercourse, banish free trade, and we should be obliged to rear up at home what we now go North to enjoy.[11]

Fitzhugh's illustrations of the alleged fallacies of free trade were taken in large part from Virginia's situation. He hoped for an independent Virginia nationalism which must be secured by political, economic, and cultural autonomy, all within a loose federal union of convenience.

[10] *Ibid.,* 122.

[11] Richmond *Examiner,* April 21, 1854.

Although he opposed a compound Southernism as impractical, the Virginian recognized the unique community of interests and ideals among the various Southern states. Each of these states, however, must strive independently to achieve the goal of essential self-sufficiency.

As a step in this direction for his own state, he advocated a reorganization of the Virginia banking system. Fitzhugh, himself, whatever might be his aristocratic disdain for trade in the abstract, had sponsored a legislative petition for the chartering of a bank in Port Royal.[12] Now he recommended that the state banks be given additional powers to engage in branch banking and to increase their capital at any time, thus promoting a flexible currency. This was necessary in view of the sudden increase of wealth and population in Virginia during the fifties. Bank directors, he pointed out, were a conservative class and could be safely trusted with currency control since inflation or severe deflation would injure them. Besides, he added, their conservatism was a desirable offset to the potentialities of "universal" suffrage established by Virginia's recent constitution.[13]

Together with an expanded state banking system, Fitzhugh's program of economic nationalism required the growth of moderate-sized towns, an aim to be furthered by an elaborate plan of internal improvements.

> Towns and villages are breaks that arrest and prevent the exhausting drain of agriculture, aided by rivers and roads. They consume the crops of the neighborhood, its wood and timber, and thus not only furnish a home market, but manures to replenish the lands. They afford respectable occupations, in the mechanic arts, commerce, manufactures, and the professions, for the energetic young men of the neighborhood. They sustain good schools, which a sparse country neighborhood never can. They furnish places and opportunities for association and rational enjoyment to the neighborhood around.[14]

[12] Fredericksburg *News*, December 16, 1852.
[13] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South*, 131–32.
[14] *Ibid.*, 136.

Fitzhugh's internal improvements would avoid increasing the tributaries to free trade. Roads and railroads would penetrate to the West, linking tidewater counties with the interior and cutting off the Northern influence. Southern cities would develop amidst a prosperous country of gardens, orchards, and villas. Unlike such gigantic cities as New York and London, they would not "impoverish a world to enrich a neighborhood." Railroads, he believed, "almost invariably increase national wealth to an amount greatly exceeding the cost of their construction." Besides, he insisted, the money spent in such enterprises was actually saved, for in exclusively agricultural countries all money not spent for subsistence was carried off from the country. These projects, financed at public expense, would avoid the dangers of private monopoly.

Eastern Virginia, he complained, opposed all innovations and clung "to mud roads as pertinaciously as many of her old gentry did to fairtops, shorts and kneebuckles." Shortsighted tidewater citizens often complained that they were being taxed to build roads for the western counties. On the contrary, these roads might be considered with equal propriety as an instrument making the West tributary to the East, and western Virginia could say that she was compelled "to pay for a stick to break her own head." Eastern Virginia was content to imitate others in all things. "Go to England or the North," challenged Fitzhugh, who had done neither, "and you can foretell our condition ten years hence, as certainly as you can tell this season in Paris the fashion of ladies' bonnets next season in America." [15]

Another cardinal feature of Fitzhugh's program for nationalism, permeated with the ideals of ancient Greek democracy, was educational reform. The South must wipe out the stigma of illiteracy for its white population. "Our Southern free-trade philosophy, our favorite maxim, 'every

[15] *Ibid.*, 142–43.

man for himself,' has been the cause of the neglect of popular education." Hence came abolitionist taunts and the censure of the world. Even "despotic Prussia" compelled parents to send their children to schools supported at public expense. He pointed out the expediency as well as justice of his suggestion.

> As our's is a government of the people, no where is education so necessary. The poor, too, ask no charity, when they demand universal education. They constitute our militia and our police. They protect men in possession of property, as in other countries; and do much more, they secure men in possession of a kind of property which they could not hold a day but for the supervision and protection of the poor. This very property has rendered the South merely agricultural, made population too sparse for neighborhood schools, prevented variety of pursuits, and thus cut the poor off as well from the means of living, as from the means of education.

The duty of Virginia, as well as of every government, was clear as far as education was concerned. Considered action must be taken now before the forces of universal suffrage took any rash steps. Among the preliminary measures might be the furnishing of a large weekly newspaper to every poor family at less than a dollar a year. "The meanest newspaper in the country," wrote Fitzhugh in words possessing an odd Jeffersonian ring, "is worth all the libraries in Christendom. It is desirable to know what the ancients did, but it is necessary to know what our neighbors and fellow country-men are doing." Other gradual steps might be taken. "We ought, like the Athenians, to be the best educated people in the world."

Not only must the state educate its people, but it must also open to them avenues of employment. The system of internal improvements he had previously outlined was, he thought, adequate for this end. "Government may do too much for the people, or it may do too little," he stated.

"We have committed the latter error." Economic rivalry between the races might be ended by confining the Negro to farm work and coarse mechanical operations. "Like the Roman citizen, the Southern white man would become a noble and a privileged character, and he would then like negroes and slavery, because his high position would be due to them." He called upon the South to face the facts of internal dissension. "The path of safety is the path of duty! Educate the people, no matter what it may cost!" [16]

In a chapter, "Small Nationalities," Fitzhugh reviewed the record of achievement in ancient Phoenicia, Carthage, Greece, Rome, Venice, Holland, and other countries.

> We should learn from these instances in history to prize and guard State Rights. We should, as far as consistent with the Constitution, make each State independent of the rest of the world; create a necessity for the exercise of all the arts, sciences, trades, professions and other pursuits that pertain to separate nationality. . . . Let the States of the South look to this matter. Are they willing to remain mere colonies and plantations for the centres of trade, or will they preserve their separate nationality?

Elsewhere he recommended that the South choose the better part between "head-work and hand-work," and emulate the perfection of ancient Greece and Rome. A diversified South, free of the bondage of exclusive agriculture, should be able to sustain expensive public improvements, schools, and colleges of its own. Only in this way would it achieve its ideals.[17]

Fitzhugh's nationalistic attack upon free trade belongs clearly to the tradition of national economics best represented by his contemporaries, Friedrich List of Germany and Henry C. Carey, a Philadelphian. Both List and Carey saw existing free trade practices as a weapon of industrial

[16] *Ibid.*, 144–45.

[17] *Ibid.*, 203. This appears almost verbatim in the Richmond *Examiner*, September 1, 1854.

Great Britain to exercise a permanent political as well as economic hegemony over the less efficient industrial and agricultural countries. List's work, influenced by Alexander Hamilton, found its earliest expression in the famous *Zollverein* movement, a customs union of the German states particularly aimed against British competitors, which prefaced the creation of the German Empire.

Henry C. Carey (1793–1879), one of the most outspoken American opponents of English political economy, came remarkably close to Fitzhugh's position and it is not unlikely that the Virginian was familiar directly or indirectly with Carey's volume, *The Harmony of Interests, Agricultural, Manufacturing, and Commercial,* published in 1852, two years before *Sociology for the South.* Carey's anti-British bias and agrarian sympathies gave his work a striking similarity to the Southerner's writings. Like Fitzhugh and List he emphasized the civilizing influence of manufacturing and commerce, while condemning the selfishness and centralizing tendency of free trade:

> The object of the now dominant class in England is that of bringing about free trade with the world. . . .
>
> Three-fourths of the nation are engaged in the work of transporting, converting, or exchanging the products of others, adding nothing whatever to the quantity produced, while living out of it, and thus deteriorating the condition of the land-owners and labourers of England and of the world.[18]

England's policy, he contended, closed the factories and furnaces of Russia, Germany, and the United States, forcing their populations to become exclusively agricultural.[19] Carey's father, Mathew (1760–1839), was an economist even more clearly in the nationalist tradition. His early championship of the American System of internal improvements, protectionism, and a national bank gave Clay

[18] Henry C. Carey, *The Harmony of Interests, Agricultural, Manufacturing, and Commercial* (Philadelphia, 1852; rev. 1865), 132.

[19] *Ibid.,* 100.

a political program and encouraged the work of List during his American consular experience.

Privately, in a letter of 1855 to Holmes, Fitzhugh admitted important modifications in his condemnation of laissez faire which unmask the psychology of a propagandist:

> It seems to me that small "Free Societies" like the Hanseatic Towns and Venice should always exist. But they, like New England, must derive their support from Slave Societies, trade and manufacture for them. Again I like a good deal of free competition, but would relieve the weak and poor, and ignorant, from its crushing operations—confine it to the rich, skilful, and professional. I dislike foreign trade altogether but did not think it time to break ground on that subject. The North of the Chesapeake cheats us. I don't wish we should cheat, plunder, and filibuster South of Chesapeake.[20]

In other respects as well, Fitzhugh revealed that his published opinions did not always conform to his private convictions.

Whether he was directly indebted to List and the Careys is far less significant than the fact that he shared with them the fierce youthful energies of nationalism against the moribund federal spirit of Europe and America. Nationalism and centralization were increasingly in the ascendant during the second half of the nineteenth century; but it was Northern centralization and nationalism, with its powerful commercial-industrial basis, which were to prevail over Southern particularism and federalistic ideals. Fitzhugh's sociology, then, was but the intellectual façade for his all-pervading structure of Southern nationalism.

[20] Fitzhugh to Holmes, April 11, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

Chapter VII

JEFFERSONIANISM: THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

THE romantic nationalism of Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South* went far beyond an arraignment of classical economics and its cultural implications. It was not enough for the author to attack the cosmopolitan spirit of laissez faire without a parallel assault upon the eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment itself which had nurtured such individualistic ideals. Nor was Fitzhugh wandering afield as far as his purpose was concerned by choosing to direct his strongest shafts against the ideals of the *philosophes*. If the defense of Southern institutions, particularly slavery, required a nationalistic solution, consistency demanded the destruction of the surviving liberalism of Jefferson's Virginia which reflected the social theories of James Harrington, Locke, and Rousseau, as well as those of the Sage of Monticello himself. To Fitzhugh it was clear that the alliance of Jefferson's natural rights philosophy with the assumptions of the social compact doctrines sanctioned a liberalism which imperiled the existence of both slavery and the planter's way of life.

There were several excellent reasons why a proslavery man should attempt to undermine Jeffersonian traditions in 1854. Foremost among these was the origin of a new Republican party, embracing various antislavery elements and reviving a name still vivid in the memories of many of that generation. With considerable force the founders could urge that the Democratic party, wedded to the

status quo, had long since lost the revolutionary energies of its illustrious patron and hence had ceased to be the logical successor of the old Republicans. With an eye for practical politics they hoped to attract old-line Democrats by the magic of the Jeffersonian label. Jefferson, they contended, had originated their fundamental policy of slavery restriction in his draft of the Ordinance of 1784.[1] To its followers the new Republican party came not to destroy but to fulfill the gospel of equalitarianism and natural rights.

By 1854 leading abolitionists had gravitated naturally to the idealism of the Declaration of Independence in decided preference to the realism of the American Constitution. Seward's discovery that there was a higher law than the Constitution found a responsive chord in anti-slavery circles, just as it was execrated among moderates and conservatives. Especially significant among those who sought to use Jefferson's famous Declaration in the anti-slavery crusade was the Reverend Francis Wayland, president of Brown University and a professor of moral philosophy. He had written a widely read textbook, *The Elements of Moral Science,* published originally in 1835, but reprinted in numerous editions thereafter. The book took on the aspect of an elaborate commentary upon the Declaration of Independence with the additional feature that it left no doubts upon the evil of slaveholding. Wayland's extreme emphasis on individual rights, arising from the compact philosophy, left at times little scope for social action.[2] Southern university theologians, particularly the Reverend William A. Smith of Randolph-Macon College, demanded that Wayland's book be expelled from every Southern school and this cry was quickly taken up by the press.

1 William S. Meyers, *The Republican Party* (New York, 1928), 41.

2 Francis Wayland, *The Elements of Moral Science* (London, 1853?), 180–208, *passim.*

In Virginia, as elsewhere in the South, a variety of fresh factors tended to discredit Jeffersonianism. An increasing religious orthodoxy brought into sharp relief the tradition of Jefferson's alleged infidelity. The younger generation of proslavery writers had come to look upon the Declaration of Independence very much as did Rufus Choate, the brilliant conservative lawyer of Massachusetts, who derided it as a mass of "glittering and sounding generalities." Governor Hammond of South Carolina, as already noted, deprecated the "fine sounding and sentimental" phrases of the Declaration.[8] To tidewater Virginians, particularly, Jefferson's name meant the abolition of the feudal customs of entail and primogeniture, which were the backbone of the powerful landed aristocracy; his work in dethroning the Established Church removed another bulwark of the privileged order; and his active role in promoting the gradual abolition of slavery was especially offensive to a rising conservative generation. After Fitzhugh's fresh attack on Jeffersonian liberalism, a host of proslavery writers were to take up his theme along the lines he had carved out.

Until the advent of abolitionism, wrote Fitzhugh, the abstractions of the Declaration did little harm and could be disregarded. The situation was far otherwise now, and the necessities of the time required an investigation of the principles in that noted instrument. At the time the Declaration was written, he asserted, men's minds were heated by patriotic zeal and blinded by a false materialistic philosophy which, beginning with Locke's sensationalism, "had ripened on the Continent into open infidelity." The doctrines of the divine right of kings and of prescriptive

[8] Carl Becker, *The Declaration of Independence* (New York, 1922), 244–45. The decline of the Jeffersonian tradition in Virginia and the other Southern states, together with Fitzhugh's role in this process, is the substance of the interesting study by Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (Durham, N.C., 1940).

government had been overthrown in England, while in France speculation had replaced faith.

> The human mind became extremely presumptuous, and undertook to form governments on exact philosophical principles, just as men make clocks, watches or mills. They confounded the moral with the physical world, and this was not strange, because they had begun to doubt whether there was any other than a physical world.[4]

He then proceeded to write a commentary on the introductory paragraphs of the Declaration. Men, he declared, were not born physically, morally, or intellectually equal and these inequalities produced in turn inequalities of actual rights. Environment also aggravated inherent inequalities among individuals. "Generally the rich associate and intermarry with each other, the poor do the same; the ignorant rarely associate with or intermarry with the learned, and all society shuns contact with the criminal, even to the third and fourth generations." Fitzhugh's restatement of his own doctrine of human rights was that " 'some were born with saddles on their backs,' and others booted and spurred to ride them,—and the riding does them good." There were no institutions, he believed, which could prevent the powerful few from acquiring their rule over the multitude.

Nor was it true that life and liberty were inalienable rights. Fitzhugh cited various illustrations from ancient and contemporary history proving that voluntary enslavement to escape starvation was common among such peoples as the Chinese. Soldiers and sailors, the dependent and the vicious, all surrendered life and liberty under every variety of circumstances. Still less was there an inherent right to the "pursuit of happiness." In fact, Fitzhugh added, the great object of government was to "restrict, control and punish man 'in the pursuit of happiness.' "

[4] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South*, 175.

Under the competitive system, which accepted such a doctrine, "most men's happiness consists in destroying the happiness of other people."

What then did Jefferson mean? Probably, said Fitzhugh, tongue in cheek, "that all men were created with an equal title to property. Carry out such a doctrine, and it would subvert every government on earth." [5] Speaking in a derogatory sense, he found Jefferson "an enthusiastic speculative philosopher." As for the ideas of Benjamin Franklin, who had been on the same committee entrusted to draw up the Declaration, he "was too much of a physical philosopher, too utilitarian and material in his doctrines, to be relied on in matters of morals or government." Being "wise, cunning and judicious," Franklin had made no objection to the document since he saw that it would meet the occasion and remain innocuous for the future. "If these abstractions," Fitzhugh wrote, "have some hidden and cabalistic meaning, which none but the initiated can comprehend, then the Declaration should have been accompanied with a translation, and a commentary to fit it for common use,—as it stands, it deserves the tumid yet appropriate epithets which Major Lee somewhere applies to the writings of Mr. Jefferson, it is 'exhuberantly false, and arborescently fallacious.' " [6]

Boldly Fitzhugh went on to attack his state's great manifesto of liberalism, the Virginia Bill of Rights, written by his distant kinsman, George Mason of Fairfax County, adopted by the Assembly on June 12, 1776, and ultimately lodged in part in the Federal Constitution. This document appears to have been the immediate forerunner of the Declaration of Independence, as is evident in the opening resolutions:

all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state

[5] *Ibid.*, 179. [6] *Ibid.*, 182.

of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.[7]

However, Fitzhugh felt that he had already exploded these fallacious ideas and he now concentrated his criticism upon the fourth clause of the Bill of Rights:

That no man, or set of men are entitled to exclusive or separate [emoluments or] privileges from the community, but in consideration of public services; which not being descendible, neither ought the offices of Magistrate, Legislator, or Judge to be hereditary.

This phrase to begin with, said Fitzhugh, was obscure and bad English, but he supposed that the author meant by emoluments "such harmless baubles as titles of nobility and coats of arms." It was unrealistic, he believed, to forget that large hereditary properties constituted a "separate emolument or privilege." Mason had failed to recognize that law secured the right of an individual to hold as many as ten thousand acres of land and five hundred slaves to the exclusion of everyone else and to transmit this property to his offspring, "although [this is] an exclusive hereditary privilege far transcending any held by the nobility of Europe." [8]

Property was not a natural right, as the liberals contended, wrote Fitzhugh, but a conventional one, "the mere creature of society and law." Although it was not expedient to deprive a man of property because he abused its possession, still if all "private property generally were so used as to injure, instead of promote [the] public good, then society might and ought to destroy the whole institution." Thus the government's taxing power was limited by considerations of the public good rather than by

[7] Kate M. Rowland, *The Life of George Mason* (New York, 1892), I, 438.
[8] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South,* 184.

any regard for the natural right of property. If the doctrine of natural rights as applied to property were carried to its logical ultimate, it meant as dangerous an abstraction as the divine right of kings, with fully as disastrous results in the offing.

"Institutions are what man can see, feel, venerate and understand," he asserted, rejecting the a priori abstractions of the Declaration and the Virginia Bill of Rights. Written constitutions, whether prepared by Jefferson, Locke, More, or the Abbé Siéyès, could not be trusted to correspond with realities. In fact, he contended, constitutions should never be written until several centuries after government had been instituted in order to permit observation of the actual workings of national institutions. The United States, it appeared, would soon have two constitutions, one the a priori instrument "which no one regards" and the other "the practical" one representing the true situation. Fitzhugh explained:

> Whigs disregard our written constitution, when banks, tariffs or internal improvements are in question; Democrats respect it not when there is a chance to get more territory; and Young America, the dominant party of the day, will jump through its paper obstructions with as much dexterity as harlequin does through the hoop.

Such constitutions were then things of straw, remote from the everyday world of hard facts.

Fitzhugh's rejection of "a priori abstractions" inevitably caused him to minimize such political conceptions as "sovereignty" in its accepted sense, for he saw the incidence of actual power in numerous voluntary associations and relationships of men—a theoretical position not fundamentally different from the pluralists of a later generation of political scientists. In a striking paragraph which best clarifies this conception, he declared:

State governments, and senators, and representatives, and militia, and cities, and churches, and colleges, and universities, and landed property, are institutions. Things of flesh and blood, that know their rights, "and knowing dare maintain them." We should cherish them. They will give permanence to government, and security to State Rights. But the abstract doctrines of nullification and secession, the general principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and Constitution of the United States, afford no protection of rights, no valid limitations of power, no security to State Rights. The power to construe them, is the power to nullify them.[9]

He was clearly no disciple of Calhoun, seeking logical exercises in the Constitution and a formula of resistance to governmental authority. In fact, at this period Fitzhugh declared Calhoun's doctrines to be fully exploded. As already noted, he had preferred the Presidential candidacy of Van Buren in 1840 to that of Calhoun, possibly for such reasons. Later he was to modify his mistrust of Calhounism to some extent.

Jefferson, as an exponent of liberalism, had destroyed primogeniture and entail in Virginia. Fitzhugh proposed to restore much of this system. However, he did not go so far as to advocate the huge entailed estates of England because they produced "an idle, useless and vicious aristocracy." Lands of a reasonable size should be kept together. "We need not fear the mad dog cry of aristocracy; a man with an entailed estate of five hundred acres, and a coat of arms to boot, would not be a very dangerous character." Besides, he added, useless large landholders and bankers with five millions transmitting these to generations were "as good aristocrats as any German princes. We have the *things,* exclusive hereditary privileges and aristocracy, amongst us, in their utmost intensity; let us not be frightened at the *names;* but so mould our institutions,

[9] *Ibid.,* 188.

regardless of prejudices, technicalities, names, or titles, as will best promote, 'the greatest good of the greatest number.' " [10]

In a startlingly modern phrase he accused Jefferson of desiring a "total revolution," pervading every phase of life. "Total changes," he wrote, "which revolutions propose are never wise or practicable, because most of the institutions of every country are adapted to the manners, morals and sentiments of the people." Reforms, on the other hand, were good which attempted to remove the incrustations of time and abuse on ancient institutions "to keep them in good working order, and to adapt them to the gradually changing circumstances of mankind." Fortunately for the United States, he thought, Jefferson's ideological revolution was thwarted by practical men who saw the necessity of adopting English-tried institutions while advocating independence. "Our separation from England was a great and salutary reform, not a revolution." [11]

Fitzhugh's philosophy of government emphasized the fact of man's natural gregariousness, his instinct to form associations. Hence he rejected all social compact thinking such as that of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Jefferson which posited an extremely individualistic "state of nature." Only free society, he asserted, corresponded to the "dog-eat-dog" situation of Hobbes's "state of nature." Otherwise the concept was fictitious. At this time Fitzhugh was unacquainted directly with Aristotle's theories regarding the natural origin of society and hence he believed that his own observations regarding man's associative nature were original.

Nor did Jefferson's work in disestablishing the Anglican Church in Virginia escape his attention. The growing separation of church and state as well as the wholesale confiscation of church lands during the sixteenth century ap-

[10] *Ibid.*, 190–91.

[11] *Ibid.*, 208–209.

peared to him as the worst fruits of the Age of the Reformation. As an Episcopalian, belonging to a church which claimed to antecede the Protestant Revolt, Fitzhugh could afford to attack this social and religious revolution. "No government," he asserted, "had ever existed without a recognized state religion. To dispense with an institution so universal and so natural, was a bold experiment." [12]

Another result of liberalism which he violently disliked was the women's rights movement. In his earlier pamphlets he had condemned the entrance of women in competitive pursuits and their progressive masculinization. He observed with misgivings the startling contemporary rise of outstanding women intellectuals to high achievement in the fields of literature, philanthropy, and the arts. In common with other conservatives, particularly those of the South, he singled out for condemnation the unconventional literary production of Frances Wright and Fredrika Bremer, the latter a visitor in Virginia at the time.[13] For Harriet Beecher Stowe and Harriet Martineau there was additional cause for attack because of their championship of abolitionism. He advised women to disguise strength of mind, or body, if they possessed any, and thus retain their empire in the home. With the ingenuousness of the romantic he exclaimed:

So long as she is nervous, fickle, capricious, delicate, diffident and dependent, man will worship and adore her. Her weakness is her strength, and her true art is to cultivate and improve that weakness. Woman naturally shrinks from public gaze and from the struggle and competition of life.

In a later passage he added: "We would infinitely prefer to nurse a sickly woman, to being led about by a masculine blue stocking." [14]

[12] *Ibid.*, 109.

[13] See note on Fredrika Bremer, in *Southern Quarterly Review,* XVII (1850), 506–507.

[14] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South,* 217.

Fitzhugh believed that liberalism and gross utilitarianism went hand in hand, carrying with them a steady degeneration of all "departments of genius, taste and art." Only in the physical sciences did he see advancement. The beauties of ancient Greek and Roman art, together with the great medieval monuments of Gothic architecture, had gone forever, to be replaced by the ephemeral fashions of the modern individualistic age.

> And now the world seems to regard nothing as desirable except what will make money and what costs money. There is not a poet, an orator, a sculptor, or painter in the world. The tedious elaboration necessary to all the productions of high art would be ridiculed in this money-making, utilitarian, charlatan age.

Consistent to the end, Fitzhugh rejected liberalism in still other forms as well, not the least of which was the optimistic eighteenth century doctrine of progress. With the Biblical poet he held that there was nothing new under the sun—except liberalism. That too would pass and yield to some universal paternalistic philosophy. He recognized the forces of social change and adjustment, but saw no tendency that might be reckoned progress in the sense of continuous improvement. The fundamental principles of human action had long ago been discovered and the liberals, who pretended to a new social science, were mere charlatans embarking the world upon the disastrous experiment of free society with its callous acceptance of the automatic controls of the price system.[15]

"One set of ideas," predicted Fitzhugh in *Sociology for the South,* "will govern and control after awhile the civilized world. Slavery will everywhere be abolished, or every where be reinstituted." Thus did the Virginian pose the dilemma of free versus slave society, although refusing to believe that the issue must be decided on the battlefield. Four years later Lincoln, in his famous "house-divided"

[15] *Ibid.,* 90–91.

speech of 1858, was to reiterate similarly in solemn tones, "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. . . . It will become all one thing, or all the other." Even more apposite were the challenging words of Seward, a few months after Lincoln's address, that the "antagonistic systems" of free labor and slavery represented "an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces." [16] In the eyes of Fitzhugh and certain other proslavery men like Grayson of South Carolina, this fundamental conflict was between the status of the "hireling and the slave."

Fitzhugh looked across the Atlantic for the most striking evidences of the iniquities of laissez-faire social systems. Like much of his later writings, *Sociology for the South* drew its evidence almost exclusively from the examples of suffering among the Western European masses, giving a wide berth to the problems of the Northern states. The latter, Fitzhugh believed, were in an exceptional position owing to the industrial safety valve provided by the cheap lands of the West. They, too, he inferred, would in time exhaust this heritage and decline to the despairing conditions of Western Europe. Interestingly enough, it was an evangelical Tory, Lord Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury, a man with a profound distrust of the new democratic shibboleths, whose determined onslaught on the industrial ruling classes during the forties was directly responsible for salutary reforms. In 1842 his shocking parliamentary disclosures revealed the plight of small, badly nourished children together with women laboring in the filth and dampness of English mines, shrouded in gloom during the day only to emerge into the outer darkness for a brief rest during the night.[17] He succeeded in intro-

[16] *Ibid.*, 94. The significance of this antithesis has been best observed in William E. Dodd, *The Cotton Kingdom* (New Haven, 1919), 65–67; and Arthur C. Cole, *The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850–1865* (New York, 1934), Chaps. II, III, XI, and particularly pp. 276–77.

[17] *Parliamentary Papers*, XV–XVII, appendixes I and II, *passim*.

ducing a maximum ten-hour day for women and children in the textile factories during 1847 despite the most formidable resistance from the owners and their supporters among the classical economists.

Nassau Senior, for example, an eminent economist, insisted that all profits were made "in the last hour." [18] John Bright, humanitarian and friend of the American slave, bitterly opposed this reform as a factory owner, predicting a reduction in the wages earned.[19] Liberals of the Manchester type could warn Parliament of the Malthusian specter that population tended to outstrip the food supply and therefore state intervention in behalf of the poor was unscientific and dangerous to national prosperity. The "iron law of wages," not the callousness of the factory owner, they argued, kept compensation close to the subsistence level. There was no governmental remedy for the improvidence of the poor.

As Fitzhugh took up his pen in 1854, these were all vivid facts, although imperceptibly the golden age of British capitalism had already begun, carrying with it a steady rise in real wages, improved working conditions, and a gradual softening of the harsh complacency of Manchester liberalism into a more humane mold. A literature of social protest had come into being, reflecting an aroused social conscience. Christian Socialists like Charles Kingsley and Frederick D. Maurice competed with the Marxian Socialists to recruit the worker into their ranks. The British reviews brought to Fitzhugh's door the intellectual currents of mid-nineteenth century England.

Pauperism and beggary in England, asserted Fitzhugh, were unknown until the villeins began to escape from their masters to engage in a nomadic and predatory life. Their new wild liberty resulted in a steady deterioration of physical well-being, "for liberty had made them from necessity

[18] George D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, *The British Common People, 1746–1938* (New York, 1938), 284.

[19] Philip Bright (ed.), *The Diaries of John Bright* (New York, 1931), 75–76.

thieves and murderers." During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—"the halcyon days of vagabond liberty" —their numbers increased steadily, but their progressive impoverishment spurted ever ahead. The English peasantry in the glorious days of Crécy and Agincourt, when feudalism prevailed, were brave, virtuous, and enjoyed considerable comfort—"at least, that comfort differed very little from that of their lords and masters." Ultimately, they had become "freemen and cowards," as evidenced by their attitude during the eighteenth century wars of the Stuart Pretenders.[20]

Turning briefly to the Continent, he attempted to prove that liberty had had a similarly degrading effect on other propertyless workers as well. Starvation had bred the first French Revolution and its spread was not halted until it came to Russia where "men had homes and houses and a country to fight for." Russian serfs and undisciplined Cossacks, fighting for these precious possessions, were able to annihilate Napoleon. Fitzhugh as a propagandist overlooked the fact that Napoleon had been defeated by the Russian terrain and climate more than by serf armies which had actually been conquered at Borodino. He deplored the fact that Napoleon had swept away feudalism and impaired the vigor of the Church, leaving Western Europe "without a stay or a hope." Subsequently, the prisons and poorhouses were rapidly filled, penal colonies received heavy recruitments, and the gallows was "ever pendant with its subject." Paris starved, built barricades, rebelled in 1830 and 1848, ultimately discovering the fallacy of political changes as a panacea for the ills of society. Finally in 1852 Louis Napoleon became emperor, a politician for whom Fitzhugh had at this time considerable admiration:

He is a socialist, and socialism is the new fashionable name of slavery. He understands the disease of society, and has nerve

[20] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South*, 34–35.

enough for any surgical operation that may be required to cure it. His first step in socialism was to take the money of the rich to buy wheat for all. The measure was well-timed, necessary and just. He is now building houses on the social plan for working men, and his Queen is providing nurseries and nurses for the children of the working women, just as we Southerners do for our negro women and children. It is a great economy. Fourier suggested it long after Southerners had practiced it.

While England and France starved before the fifties, Ireland had experienced its own "little episode." This nation was "the freest country in the world, where law is violated every day, mocked at and derided, whence the rich and noble have emigrated, where all are poor, all equal, and all idle." With his love for ironic understatement Fitzhugh asserted that before the potato blight of 1845 "a few thousands only had usually starved annually." But with the blight Ireland was left resourceless, without feudal lords to buy up food for the poor, and some three hundred thousand therefore starved in a single season.[21] The Virginian assumed that the feudal lord had always been a powerful buffer against famine and distress.

The heartlessness of laissez faire was revealed by the suggestion of classical economists that all would be much improved if the poorer classes would have fewer children and end a fondness for alcohol. Of one such critic, Fitzhugh remarked, "The teetotalers should give him a brass medal, for they, like he [*sic*], propose to remedy all the evils that human flesh is heir to, with abstinence and cold water." If free laborers used "too much grog and tobacco," this proved that they were not ready for freedom. Only slavery, he insisted, could enforce temperance. Besides, he added, this charge was untrue and represented the type of anti-labor abuse which might precipitate the very social revolution that liberals dreaded.[22]

From the British reviews Fitzhugh learned of the sig-

[21] *Ibid.*, 42.

[22] *Ibid.*, 76–77.

nificance of a rising and all-pervading socialism as an enemy of the competitive social order. Interpreting the term broadly, he included trade unionism as a form of socialism. "Slavery to an association," he remarked, "is not always better than slavery to a single master. The professed object is to avoid ruinous underbidding and competition with one another; but this competition can never cease whilst liberty lasts." This type of socialism, like every other, was common within free society as men sought to attain the protective influence of slavery.

Socialism, he pointed out, was an old idea, having existed in ancient Crete, in Sparta, in Peru, and among the Essenes in Judea. All ancient institutions were tinged with socialistic attitudes as in the relation of slave to master and of the citizen to the state. "Our only quarrel with Socialism is," he declared, "that it will not honestly admit that it owes its recent revival to the failure of universal liberty, and is seeking to bring about slavery again in some form."

Since British Radicals and Chartists attacked free competition, Fitzhugh classified them as Socialists. Likewise he recognized the Tory socialism of Young England, but deplored its weak remedies. To this group he added the literary proponents of social reform, particularly Charles Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, Carlyle, and John H. Newman. More recruits to socialism appeared among "a large portion of the clergy." Elsewhere the story was the same. "Germany is full of Communists; social discontent is universal; and her people are leaving *en masse* for America —hopeless of any amelioration at home for the future." So universal, in fact, was the socialist principle in history that "all governments, in civilized countries, recognize the obligation to support the poor, and thus, in some degree, make all property a common possession." Hence sprang the affinity of socialism and slavery.

The perfect association of labor desired by all Socialists

could only be found in the South. "A well-conducted farm in the South is a model of associated labor that Fourier might envy," he boasted. Drawing a romantic picture of Negro life on the plantation, he argued that this solution of the labor problem was ideal considering the ignorance and improvidence of the Negro.[23] The laboring whites, too, were benefited, for while the Negro could be consigned exclusively to the coarser tasks, the white would enjoy a monopoly of the highly specialized trades. These favored employments would undoubtedly increase as the South became industrialized. "We need never have white slaves in the South," he concluded, "because we have black ones."[24]

"Our slaves are treated far better than they were forty years ago," he explained, "because they have improved in mind and morals, approached nearer to the master's state of civilization, and thus elicited more of his interest and attachment."[25] This was a common judgment in the South. The Fredericksburg *News,* for example, wrote in 1852 that slavery had changed profoundly since 1830: "Slaves are treated in the present day as human beings. . . . A chastened public sentiment places beyond the pale of society the man who is unkind to his slave."[26] A correspondent of the New York *Tribune,* visiting the Virginia plantations between Richmond and Charlottesville in August, 1853, confirmed this opinion only in part for Fitzhugh's eastern Virginia. "As a general thing the slaves in that section of the country are not driven very hard, and yet in almost every tract of five or six miles you would hear of some severe master."[27] What the situation was outside of his state, as in the deep South, Fitzhugh did not know, for his travels had been limited and his precious British reviews were not particularly informative on this

[23] *Ibid.,* 44–45. [24] *Ibid.,* 93. [25] *Ibid.,* 211.
[26] Fredericksburg *News,* September 30, 1852.
[27] New York *Daily Tribune,* May 1, 1854.

point. As was his wont, Fitzhugh said "South" when he meant Virginia.

However low Fitzhugh's opinion of the Negro's intellectual achievements may have been, he refused in 1854 to endorse the racialism of Gobineau, Nott, and Gliddon:

> We abhor the doctrine of "Types of Mankind," first, because it is at war with scripture, which teaches us that the whole human race is descended from a common parentage; and, secondly, because it encourages and incites brutal masters [this was an inadvertent admission] to treat negroes, not as weak, ignorant and dependent brethren, but as wicked beasts, without the pale of humanity. The Southerner is the negro's friend, his only friend. Let no intermeddling abolitionist, no refined philosophy, dissolve this friendship.

As a protection for the Negro against mistreatment, he recommended that Virginia follow Louisiana's example in providing that masters be made subject to presentment by a grand jury and to punishment for inhuman and improper conduct towards the slave.[28] Privately, he admitted that his glowing pictures of slavery had been purposely overdrawn. Writing to Holmes in April, 1855, Fitzhugh confessed, "I assure you, Sir, I see great evils in Slavery, but in a controversial work I ought not to admit them." [29]

Like other proslavery writers Fitzhugh felt that his discussion was incomplete without a summary of scriptural authority for human bondage. In a chapter on this subject the author relied exclusively on the work of Reverend Moses Stuart, formerly of Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, who had written a pamphlet, "Conscience and the Constitution," which was praised in the South and correspondingly execrated in the North as the act of a traitor.[30] Most of these Biblical evidences were already familiar in the slavery controversy. The frequent

[28] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South*, 95.
[29] Fitzhugh to Holmes, April 11, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.
[30] Editor's Note, in *De Bow's Review*, X (1851), 698.

admonitions to servants by St. Paul that they remain obedient to their masters constituted a popular source of authority. Fitzhugh added his own observation that the Bible proved the justice of all slavery, white or black; hence this supported his general theory of the universal character of slavery.

Sociology for the South concluded with a long appendix containing the author's earlier essays. Critical readers noted the disparity between some of Fitzhugh's positions as expressed in the essays and those of his later work. Some of the views of the *Sociology* also were to be repudiated shortly thereafter, such as Fitzhugh's condemnation of the revived foreign slave trade as inhuman. Within a few years he was to insist on the reopening of the African slave trade as a *sine qua non* of Southern acquiescence to remaining within the Union. Thereafter he was to fall increasingly beneath the spell of his own logic and propaganda, finding fewer evils in slavery and more flaws in free society.

Chapter VIII

WINNING THE SOUTH

MOST fortunate for the success of *Sociology for the South* was its literary sponsorship by George Frederick Holmes, foremost reviewer of the South. Fitzhugh's current articles in the Richmond *Examiner* had awakened Holmes's immediate interest in the author, whose analysis was strikingly similar to his own, and he had corresponded with the editor, Robert W. Hughes, for information regarding the forthcoming volume. It was a simple matter for Fitzhugh to obtain Holmes's consent to review the book. "I know you through the press only," wrote Fitzhugh in 1854, expressing his high esteem for the scholarly reviewer, "and much desired to have consulted with you before publishing." [1] Holmes did even better than his promise. He repeatedly called the attention of the South to a production which he considered of unique importance, heralding its merits in the Richmond *Examiner,* the *Southern Literary Messenger,* and the *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.* It is almost certain that the review of *Sociology for the South* in the *Southern Quarterly Review,* of which Holmes had been an assistant editor at one time, also came from his pen. Holmes was indeed a host in himself.

As Fitzhugh became acquainted with Holmes's own theories, which usually appeared in anonymous articles, he came to admit that the brilliant reviewer had anticipated him by several years on some of the most original ideas of

[1] Fitzhugh to Holmes, September 22, 1854, in Holmes Letter Book.

Sociology for the South.[2] In a remarkable essay, "Observations on a Passage in the Politics of Aristotle Relative to Slavery," published in 1850, Holmes had set down the major propositions underlying slavery which were to serve the younger militants of the South, including Fitzhugh. While the latter was as yet unaware of his indebtedness to Aristotle, Holmes recognized the influence of the Stagirite and chose his text from the *Politics,* "Nature has clearly designed some men for freedom and others for slavery:—and with respect to the latter, slavery is both just and beneficial." [3] Like Fitzhugh, Holmes employed a broad definition of slavery which raised that institution to a status of universality; likewise he accepted the frontier "safety valve" theory to explain the apparent exemption of the North from the extreme social evils characteristic of free society in Europe. Again, he condemned both Manchester and Jeffersonian liberalism, and identified abolitionism with the subversive isms of the day; but going beyond Fitzhugh's purely historical method, he enlarged his analysis by philosophic and legalistic considerations as well. When the popular reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Europe and in the Northern states stunned the South, it was natural for the leading editors below Mason and Dixon's line to look to Holmes for a fitting reply.[4] Fitzhugh's jubilation in acquiring such a champion is then easily understandable.

The first formal notice that was taken of *Sociology for the South* appeared during September, 1854, in the powerful Richmond *Examiner* whose editor praised the originality and value of the ideas expressed. He hailed the work as a mark of the South's determination to discard "her half-way, namby-pamby defence of slavery," based on expedi-

[2] *Id.* to *id.,* July 27, 1857, *ibid.*

[3] George F. Holmes, "Observations on a Passage in the Politics of Aristotle Relative to Slavery," in *Southern Literary Messenger,* XVI (1850), 193–205.

[4] John R. Thompson to Holmes, September 11, 1852, in George Frederick Holmes MSS. (Library of Congress).

ency, in favor of a bold assertion of universal principles.[5] Holmes followed this up a few months later with an enthusiastic three-and-one-half-column review of the book. Though his acceptance of Fitzhugh's theories was in effect an endorsement of his own views, Holmes generously abstained from pointing out any priority of discovery on his part. He asserted that the author had proved by the weight of overwhelming testimony and argument that free competition had worked the ruin and desolation of the lower classes of society in Great Britain and the Continent. Singling out for comment the section on women's rights, the Declaration of Independence, and equalitarianism, he declared that "so simply, yet conclusively is its [the equal rights doctrine's] absurdity demonstrated by him, that it is to be hoped that it will not be revived again." Altogether, he concluded, Southern institutions had been successfully vindicated "by a larger, a healthier, and a more profound philosophy than that which has affected to pass sentence of condemnation upon them." [6]

A second and more elaborate review from Holmes's pen soon appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* of Richmond. This journal, bred in the exotic tradition of Edgar Allan Poe, was then in dire financial distress, indifferently supported by Southern patronage despite its undeniable literary merits. A flattering editorial notice of Fitzhugh's book, evidently from the publisher and editor, John R. Thompson, preceded Holmes's article. Previously the *Messenger* had been inhospitable to proslavery extremism. After the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852, Thompson was privately calling for militant rebuttals "as hot as hell fire." [7]

Holmes began by pointing out the peculiar aptness of Fitzhugh's higher ground aggressiveness in the midst of

[5] Richmond *Examiner*, September 1, 1854. [6] *Ibid.*, January 2, 1855.
[7] Thompson to Holmes, August 24, 1852, in Holmes MSS.

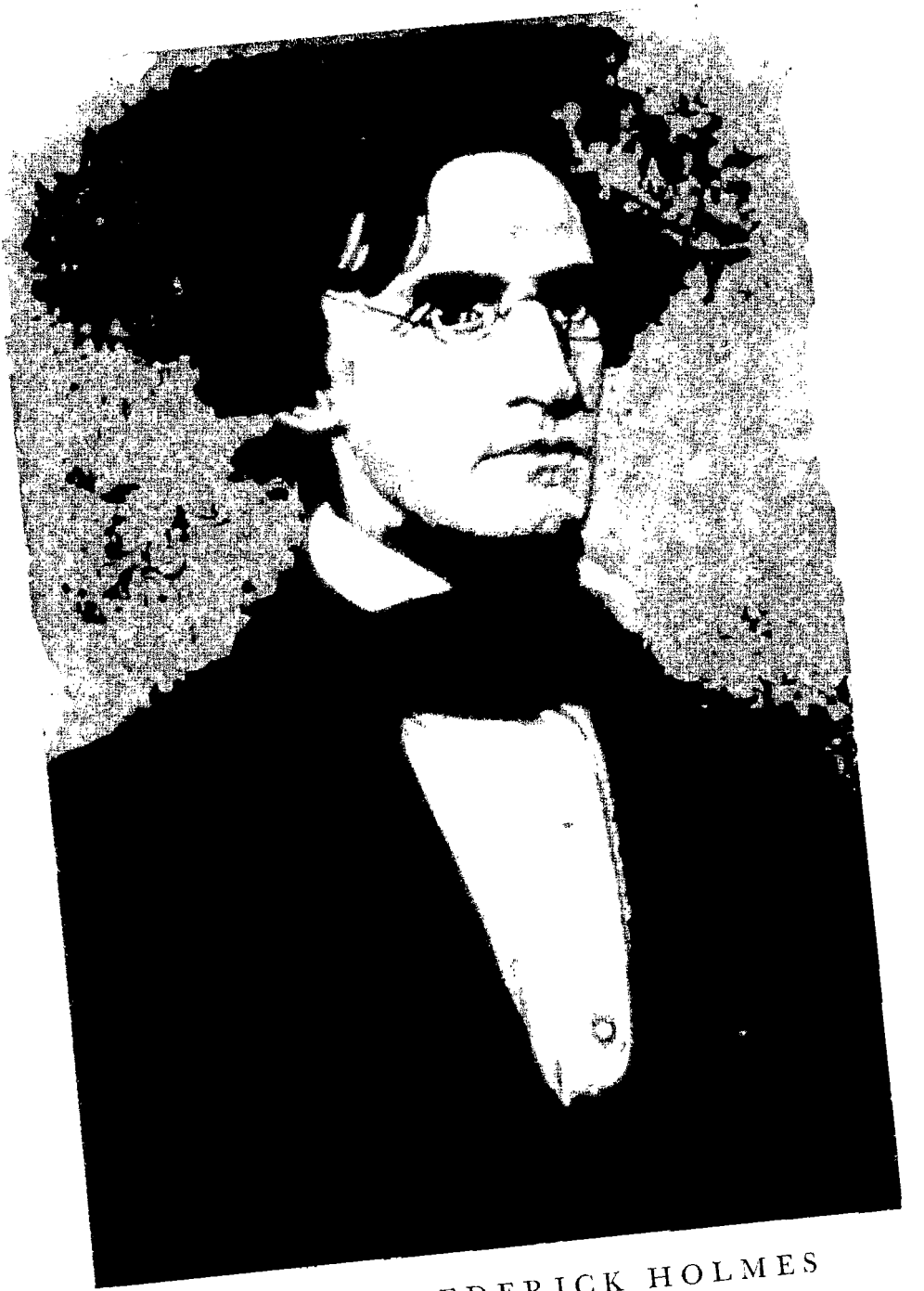
a world-wide denunciation of slavery. The book overflowed with thought and novel tenets, although it was occasionally marred by startling expressions and strained arguments. "The South should diligently master its views, and critically weigh its precepts," he advised. Every Southern planter, lawyer, mechanic, merchant, and politician would find much to learn from it. Only certain stylistic aberrations made it impossible to use *Sociology for the South* as a college textbook, he felt. Then followed a detailed endorsement of a number of Fitzhugh's contentions: The South must not imitate the North; the classical economists were guilty of perpetuating the pseudo science of the eighteenth century liberal philosophers. Holmes deprecated, however, the condemnation of political economy merely because of a school which abused its tenets. Explaining that he had been collecting evidence for years as to the failure of free society, Holmes proceeded to offer his own material, drawn from important English, French, and German sources, to strengthen Fitzhugh's case.[8]

The author was more than delighted and he immediately wrote an exuberant letter to his reviewer:

My Dear Holmes!!
First, let me thank you for your kind and able Review in the Messenger. I subscribe to every word of it. You have greatly strengthened my main position—the Failure of Free Society. You and Hughes, and I in the last year, it seems to me, have revolutionized public opinion at the South on the subject of Slavery. There, not one paper vindicated Slavery in the abstract,—now all endorse my book, and thereby endorse slavery in the abstract. This is all owing to the powerful and hortatory review with which you backed it at once in the Examiner. Without flattery, I candidly admit, "Opus superabat materiam"—the review far surpassed the work reviewed.[9]

[8] George F. Holmes, "Failure of Free Societies," in *Southern Literary Messenger*, XXI (1855), 129–41.

[9] Fitzhugh to Holmes, March 27, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.



GEORGE FREDERICK HOLMES

FROM THE PORTRAIT IN THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Subsequently, Fitzhugh was to reproduce the larger part of the *Messenger* review in his second book, *Cannibals All!*

During March, 1855, when this article appeared, Holmes published a third evaluation of *Sociology for the South* in the *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church South,* whose editor, the Reverend John M'Clintock, like Thompson of the *Messenger,* regarded the reviewer as his ablest contributor. Once more Holmes found new observations to make regarding the merits of Fitzhugh's ideas. Despite the importance for the South of the author's doctrines, Holmes expressed his fear that their novelty was too great to cause a popular revulsion of opinion at once. Still, Fitzhugh's fundamental position on the universality of the slavery principle was too soundly entrenched in Aristotelian thought to be refuted. Whatever errors existed in the book arose from its author's fondness for paradox. Some of the propositions seemed erroneous "at first blush," but further reading usually corrected these impressions. He concluded regarding Fitzhugh's work:

> In many respects it is executed with admirable sagacity, good feeling and skill. It is a new light in political philosophy and, if the flame is at times involved and concealed in the dense volumes of smoke which rise from the newly kindled mass, the flame burns strong and hot below, and will ultimately conquer and dispel the fumes in which it is enveloped at first.[10]

Holmes would have preferred a more qualified position by the author in the latter's condemnation of free society and exaltation of slavery. His academic outlook found the sweeping assertions of the propagandist rather uncomfortable, much as he desired a militant defense of the South.

It appears almost certain that Holmes wrote the review of Fitzhugh's work which appeared a year later in the

[10] George F. Holmes, "Fitzhugh's Sociology for the South," in *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church South* (Louisville), IX, New Series (1855), 181.

Southern Quarterly Review of Columbia, South Carolina, edited by William Gilmore Simms. The reviewer had been assistant editor of this journal during the forties, and his association with it had never wholly ceased. Once more Fitzhugh was supported categorically in his assertions regarding economics, political theory, and slavery with the same criticism of his unrestrained paradoxes. Some of the paragraphs were taken almost bodily from the earlier reviews. Regarding the "free and equal" phrase of the Declaration of Independence, the reviewer declared, "Mr. Fitzhugh has so effectually exposed the sophistry and fallacy involved in this celebrate[d] maxim, that it is scarcely necessary to slay the slain again." [11] Other judgments, such as the recognition of Aristotelian elements, the hypocrisy of political economists, and the significance of the book for the South coincided with those presented in the *Messenger,* the *Examiner,* and the *Methodist Review* articles. If the review were not Holmes's, it could justly be charged with plagiarism.

Subsequently, Holmes was to continue his support of Fitzhugh in *De Bow's Review.* On the occasion of reviewing Albert T. Bledsoe's work, *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery,* published the following year, he pointed out that Fitzhugh and Bledsoe were rebels against antiquated political doctrines and had inaugurated "a new school of political speculation." [12] Through Holmes, Fitzhugh came to recognize his own indebtedness to Aristotle for some of his basic assumptions. Writing to the famous reviewer in April, 1855, Fitzhugh admitted:

I received from Mr. Appleton's, a week ago, Aristotle's Politics and Economics. I find I have not only adopted his theories, his arguments, and his illustrations, but his very words. Society is a

[11] [*Id.?*], "Slavery and Freedom," in *Southern Quarterly Review,* I, New Series (1856), 62–95.

[12] *Id.,* "Bledsoe on Liberty and Slavery," in *De Bow's Review,* XXI (1856), 140.

work of nature and grows. Men are social like bees: an isolated man is like a bird of prey. Man and society are coeval. . . . It was strange that when writing my book I did not know the daring attempt I was making, till you, who had only read my newspaper essays informed me that I was assailing all the Social, Economic, Political, and Ethical philosophy of the day—but you encouraged me to proceed. Now, I find that, although Locke, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Jefferson, Franklin, Macaulay, and Calhoun are against me, Aristotle, Carlyle, you, and all the leading minds of the day are with me. Why the Devil, don't some one abuse me, and vindicate the sages of the last two centuries? I used to think I was a little paradoxical. I now fear I am a mere retailer of truisms and common places.[13]

Fitzhugh was not compelled to rely upon the mighty blows of Holmes alone. Many other writers recognized the pivotal character of *Sociology for the South* in proslavery thought. G. C. Grammer, reviewing the book for the militant *De Bow's Review,* endorsed its ideas in language not less enthusiastic than Holmes's. He praised its arraignment of free competitive societies and the sordid materialistic motives of capitalism. Despite the occasional abuse of terms, he found the book written in a "manly, vigorous, attractive style" which would afford "an hour's most delightful reading to the dullest man in Christendom." [14]

The Philadelphia correspondent of Rhett's Charleston *Mercury* added fulsome admiration to the bouquets heaped upon Fitzhugh's book. He declared that *Sociology for the South* would do much to reconcile the South to its institutions by the exposé of pauperism and misery in free society. Fitzhugh, he believed, had strongly established the contentions he had laid down.[15]

From the Richmond *Whig* of June, 1855, came an edi-

[13] Fitzhugh to Holmes, April 11, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

[14] G. C. Grammer, "The Failure of Free Society," in *De Bow's Review,* XIX (1855), 37.

[15] Quoted in Fredericksburg *News,* June 4, 1855; and *De Bow's Review,* XIX (1855), 37n.

torial endorsement which indicates the mounting popularity of Fitzhugh's book in the South:

His work evinces close thought and a most vigorous analysis and exposure of the follies which curse the popular philosophy of modern society. It has received from all quarters the highest commendation. It is emphatically a Southern book, and we know no title which should commend it more to the people of the South, whose cause and institutions it so powerfully vindicates, by arguments drawn from incontrovertible facts, and withal clothed in a style of simple strength.[16]

The Alexandria (Va.) *Gazette,* although restrained in its praise, indicated the rising sentiment in favor of the book evident as early as January, 1855, before any of the major periodicals had published their reviews:

Mr. George Fitzhugh's work on Sociology is attracting much attention, and the press not only in Virginia, but elsewhere, has commented upon it, always with the most favorable references to the learning and ability displayed by the author. . . . There are many of the conclusions to which Mr. Fitzhugh arrives, which we, by our process of reasoning, can never reach—but there are suggestive thoughts which the public mind ought to receive and which should be reflected on and studied.[17]

Particularly flattering to Fitzhugh's reputation was the extended discussion in the sedate and conservative Washington *National Intelligencer* by James Clarke Welling, its brilliant literary editor. Welling, although born in New Jersey, had married into the prominent Garnett family of Westmoreland County, Virginia, and apparently acquired the sympathies of his adopted state. He was a personal friend of Fitzhugh's, which factor undoubtedly flavored his extremely friendly comments. *Sociology for the South,* together with several other Southern books appearing simultaneously, seemed to him to be evidence that the South was deserting its "long-favored castle of indolence" for an

[16] Quoted in Fredericksburg *News,* June 4, 1855.
[17] Quoted *ibid.,* January 25, 1855.

active cultural and economic rivalry with the North. No longer was that section content with confining the debate over its interests to the halls of Congress, but it had decided to enter the national literary field as well. The author, he observed, was a careful scholar who had thoroughly examined the relations of the slavery institution to almost every important field of knowledge.

> He has brought under his critical examination and has confuted by irresistible logic many propositions which have been regarded as axioms in political economy; and what is dignified with the name of science he proves to have been founded not upon known facts in nature or humanity, but upon the wildest imagination of speculative philosophy.[18]

Welling delighted in Fitzhugh's attack on Jefferson and his Declaration of Independence, quoting his strictures at length and praising the author's audacity in assailing the false philosophy concealed behind the equalitarian doctrine. "It is easier," wrote the editor, "to meet with a thousand who think of it in the same manner than it would be to find one with courage enough to speak of it with the same frankness." He concluded by recommending the book to all readers, since the author's ideas corresponded with the "dictates of sound reason and pure Christian morality."

It is unnecessary to cite Southern newspapers and periodicals more extensively in support of the fact that *Sociology for the South* was very favorably received. According to the Richmond *Examiner,* "one of the most brilliant and learned men in the Southern country" had praised Fitzhugh's work as "the boldest book in announcing great truths of the century." On the other hand, it is also perhaps true that unfavorable criticism of a proslavery work during the "bleeding Kansas" era on the part of a Southerner might be popularly construed as an evidence of disloyalty. Certainly, it is apparent that there were Southern journals like

[18] Washington *Daily National Intelligencer,* February 1, 1855.

Russell's which ignored Fitzhugh's book. At any rate, the fact of uniformly laudatory reviews is in itself significant.

Fitzhugh appeared distressed by the comparative silence of the Northern press. "Why are they silent?" he asked in an editorial for the Richmond *Examiner* of October, 1855: "The affectation of silent contempt will not obliterate those facts and admissions of the controversy nor prevent the world's looking into the subject of slavery in a new phase." [19] But, as he was himself aware, there was an important exception to this rule of silence at the North. This was a sardonic review occupying some three long columns of small print which appeared in Greeley's New York *Tribune* in June, roasting the author of the *Sociology* mercilessly. The reviewer observed that the "slaveholding brethren" might domineer the North politically, but in all else "speculative or practical" they proved humble pupils taking up ideas occasionally that the North had long since discarded as erroneous. Antislavery agitation in the North had set into motion an entirely new set of philosophical speculations within that area, conflicting with established opinions in morals and theology.

> Discussions as to the theory of society have been very active among us for quite a number of years. The South too, it would seem, is at length beginning to feel the magnetic influence of these discussions, disturbing the torpid stagnation of even planter brains, and beginning to breed therein some very curious maggots. . . . And that productive activity of Southern intellect which begins with such productions as Mr. Fitzhugh's *Sociology* may yet end in giving birth to some philosophic speculation honorable to its author and edifying to the world at large.[20]

The reviewer saw particular significance in *Sociology for the South* since it indicated that abolitionist attacks had

[19] Richmond *Examiner*, October 26, 1855.
[20] New York *Daily Tribune*, June 5, 1855.

been sufficiently effective to drive the South from its "hypocritical position" of retaining slavery while weeping over it as an evil. Now, he noted, the proslavery militants were attempting to force their section to defend slavery "as a good" and thus inadvertently were "bringing the South to the sticking point of emancipation." The writer was unaware that Fitzhugh's position was actually in advance of this contention. In fact, there was no real attempt to meet the author of *Sociology for the South* on the issues he had raised. Instead, the reviewer selected Fitzhugh's most vulnerable spot, his paradoxes, for criticism. This was excellent game. Fitzhugh had written: "Men of sound judgment are always men who give wrong reasons for their opinions"; "With thinking men the question never can arise, who ought to be free? Because no one ought to be free." Such statements, read without their true context, startled many a reviewer. The *Tribune* writer concluded with the observation that Fitzhugh had probably never been out of Virginia—which came close to the truth.

When the *Tribune* shortly thereafter received a copy of Grayson's *Hireling and the Slave,* Greeley wrote a caustic editorial on the "Dawn of a New Literature." The North, he declared, weary of speaking of William Gilmore Simms as the only novelist of the South, of Richard Henry Wilde as its only poet, and of Hugh Swinton Legaré as the only successful essayist, now welcomed with relief "the coming race of proslavery poets, historians, philosophers, and artists." [21]

Fitzhugh did not allow the *Tribune* attack on his book to go unchallenged and in a lengthy, but polite, open letter to Greeley he attempted to refute the criticisms of the reviewer. He admitted certain inconsistencies, however, but attributed these to its hasty production and the fact that the essays in the appendix had been written much earlier than the body of the book.

[21] *Ibid.,* June 25, 1855.

I, like most Southern men, once thought slavery morally wrong and economically evil. Reflection and investigation soon satisfied me, that negro slavery, at least, was not liable to these objections. Very recently I was led to examine what I consider the doctrine first promulgated in America by the Tribune, that "Free Society" was altogether a failure, and required subversion and reorganization on wholly new principles. As I had no faith in New Harmonys, Trialvilles, Mormonism, Shakerism, Mr. Greeley's Fourierite Phalansteries, nor even in Oneida Perfectionism, I concluded it would be necessary to fall back on some modification of domestic slavery, in Western Europe and our North, even for white men.[22]

This reply to Greeley brought a hearty endorsement from the Petersburg (Va.) *Express,* which is of interest because of its complete acceptance of Fitzhugh's position. The editor agreed that such social tenets as those of Greeley and the Socialists led to a form of slavery equally absolute with that of the Negro in the South. "And these fantastic theories," he pointed out, "are driven into their fatal absurdities, it is curious to see, by the inevitable advance of slavery *among men of the same race and family,* through the unending struggles of labor and capital." The *Express* was not only satisfied that Fitzhugh had conclusively proved the failure of free society, but also agreed that "liberty for all men, under all forms of government and in every condition of humanity, has proved a dream and an illusion." [23]

Among the abolitionists who were particularly angered by the aggressive philosophy of *Sociology for the South* was the veteran agitator, Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the Washington *National Era.* Bailey, together with James G. Birney, had edited in 1836 the Cincinnati *Philanthropist,* perhaps the first antislavery organ of the West, and had been mobbed, not once, but three times. Nevertheless, he had persisted with courageous determination. It was logical, therefore, that he should have been chosen by the American

[22] Fitzhugh to the Editor of the New York *Tribune,* June 8, 1855, quoted in Fredericksburg *News,* July 2, 1855.

[23] Quoted *ibid.,* July 2, 1855.

and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society as editor in chief of the abolitionist national organ, the Washington *National Era.* Whittier, Theodore Parker, and Mrs. Stowe were among the literary contributors to Bailey's *National Era;* and the newspaper was to play an active part in behalf of Frémont in 1856. To such a man the philosophy of *Sociology for the South* seemed a deliberate affront. Not only did the *National Era* assail every major assertion of the book, but the independent weekly edition, *Facts for the People,* also edited by Bailey, joined in the common attack on Fitzhugh.

The *National Era* insisted that the Virginian's dark picture of English poverty was overdrawn and that it was not freedom, but the lack of it which proved the undoing of the poor. Bailey admitted that capital's claim to a lion's share of the wealth constituted a great obstruction to the progress of the masses, but he felt that civilization and Christianity would one day remove this.[24] In *Facts for the People,* an unadorned propagandist leaflet, Bailey chose to make *Sociology for the South* the main editorial topic, presenting its ideas together with those of Grayson as representative of the "Civilization of the South." He assailed this new "literature of slavery" which was in process of formation and denounced his journalistic contemporary, the *National Intelligencer,* for its sponsorship of such efforts.[25]

Fitzhugh appears to have been deeply disturbed by Bailey's reviews of his book and he replied at length in his later book, *Cannibals All!* by showing that the *National Era* had actually made sufficient admissions to prove the failure of competitive society. The editor had written that slavery was no longer possible because landowners would not take the responsibility of supporting the laboring class. This, Fitzhugh considered to be an argument for, rather than against, his thesis of the benevolence of the master-slave relationship.[26]

[24] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 327–28.
[25] *Facts for the People* (Washington), September 1, 1855.
[26] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 327–28.

Another unfavorable criticism came from a volume, *Letters from the Slave States,* written by an English traveler in the South, James Stirling, who found *Sociology for the South* a "rambling declamatory affair," but important as indicating the state of public opinion at the South. He conceded, however, the justice of Fitzhugh's criticism of English industrial abuses but insisted that these were outgrowths of a transition period. To him Fitzhugh was convincing in his proof that the only alternative to laissez faire with all its evils, was slavery. Besides, remarked Stirling in a sanctimonious passage condoning industrialism at its worst, "Man was not sent into this sweating, toiling world to be saved from pain, but by pain to be ennobled." [27] Thus spoke the soul of Manchester economics.

How far did Fitzhugh actually influence the South at this time? In a day when literary property rights were lightly regarded, one frequently seeks in vain for acknowledgments among the proslavery militants to the sources of their ideas. Some, like Edmund Ruffin, admitted their indebtedness to Fitzhugh's "novel and profound views on the comparison of slavery with what is miscalled 'free society.' " [28] Others, though silent on the question of originality, reveal from internal evidence a close familiarity with the main arguments of *Sociology for the South.* Certainly the proslavery argument after 1854, as developed by Bledsoe, Grayson, De Bow, Armstrong, Stringfellow, and others, took another step forward in militancy, for the defense of the "peculiar institution" now demanded a broader assault on the citadel of liberalism.

Another suggestion of the influence of *Sociology for the South* is the fact that it sold well, particularly in Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Washington. Within a few months the edition was almost exhausted. "It sells the better," Fitzhugh teased Holmes, "because it is odd, eccentric, extravagant,

[27] James Stirling, *Letters from the Slave States* (London, 1857), 111–18.
[28] Ruffin, *Political Economy of Slavery,* 16n.

and disorderly. Its hop, skip, and jump manner is exactly like Aristotle's Politics and Economics." [29] Now, he declared, Holmes and a kind public had encouraged him to believe that he was capable of writing a college textbook on social science.

The author felt an overwhelming sense of obligation to Holmes for the promotion of his book and for a subsequent offer to aid him in the preparation of a later work. "I shall print nothing again till you see it," promised Fitzhugh. His opportunity to aid Holmes arrived in 1856 when the Englishman became a candidate for a newly established chair of history and literature at the University of Virginia. Holmes was supported by his father-in-law, former Governor John B. Floyd, whose elevation to Buchanan's Cabinet was popularly anticipated. Against him was the candidacy of Fitzhugh's friend, Dr. Welling of the *National Intelligencer,* who was strongly supported by his uncle, Senator Hunter, a member of the Board of Visitors.[30] In an editorial statement for the Richmond *Enquirer,* Fitzhugh showed his decided preference:

> If the South means to stick up to the issue of State equality, she must teach her youth that there is nothing wrong, in principle or practice, in domestic slavery. Could we secure the services of such men as Geo. F. Holmes at the University we might expect to send out champions of the South, not whining apologists for her, from that institution.
>
> We are sure that Mr. Holmes combines as much of great learning, power of reasoning and originality of thought as any man in America.[31]

Holmes won the professorial position he was to retain until his death in 1897, becoming, in Fitzhugh's words, an acknowledged "champion of the South."

[29] Fitzhugh to Holmes, April 11, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.
[30] N. H. Mapie to *id.,* February 14, 1857, in Holmes MSS.
[31] Richmond *Enquirer,* June 4, 1856.

Chapter IX

A VIRGINIAN INVADES NEW ENGLAND

ONE day in March, 1855, Fitzhugh was elated to receive an invitation to lecture upon slavery before a lyceum in New Haven. This discussion would take on the aspect of a debate, for Wendell Phillips, outstanding orator of abolitionism, was chosen to prepare a reply to him. The request had been delivered personally by Judge Eustace Conway of Caroline County, an uncle of Moncure D. Conway. A generous fee was offered, but refused, despite the fact that Fitzhugh, according to his private admission to Holmes, was "poor and embarrassed" and could not even afford to visit his professorial friend in western Virginia. He faced at the time a lawsuit involving a debt payment of $530, then before the Circuit Court of Caroline.[1] The Fredericksburg *News* proudly announced the lecture engagement with the comment, "No doubt he will acquit himself in a manner worthy of the subject and himself." [2]

The trip to the unknown North was an event in itself for Fitzhugh, whose travels rarely took him beyond the tidewater section of his state. He had begun a correspondence with various abolitionists, such as Stephen Pearl Andrews, Gerrit Smith, and the leaders of the Liberty party, and now he hoped to see them in the flesh.[3] The rendezvous with Andrews could be conveniently kept; accordingly, he

[1] Official notices of the case of *Woodson Wright v. Fountain Gaines and George Fitzhugh,* January 1, 1855, in Fredericksburg *News,* January 11, 1855; Fitzhugh to Holmes, March 27, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

[2] Fredericksburg *News,* March 15, 1855.

[3] Fitzhugh to Holmes [March, 1855?], in Holmes Letter Book.

stepped off the train at New York City to meet him and discuss their "new school of philosophy," with the results already noted. In that teeming metropolis of a half million inhabitants Fitzhugh found much to fascinate as well as to repel him. He browsed about its bookstores, taking the opportunity to order Aristotle's *Politics* whose ideas, Holmes had pointed out, bore a close similarity to Fitzhugh's own. At the same time he sat for a photograph which reveals his finely chiseled features, serious mien, and the dignified dress of an ante-bellum Virginian.

The arrival in New Haven was premature, for Wendell Phillips had been detained in Boston by a lawsuit. Fitzhugh, fully sympathetic, arranged to defer his lecture for a week which would permit his opponent sufficient time to adjust his difficulties. Meanwhile, he would visit his distant kinsman, Gerrit Smith of Peterboro, New York. This trip would take him once more to the Hudson River Valley whose scenic beauty was a revelation to him.

Smith's personal charm as well as his baronial mansion impressed Fitzhugh deeply. A handsome middle-aged gentleman, he was married to a member of the Maryland branch of Fitzhughs. He had just resigned his seat in Congress. His Virginia visitor found him "learned, candid, honest, well-informed," but marveled that a man who was perhaps the largest owner of real estate in the North should be "the most uncompromising agrarian in the world." Smith had inherited his father's estate worth $400,000 and proceeded to display an active benevolence, according to Fitzhugh, which was only exceeded by its "grossness of misapplication." The visitor was struck by what he considered to be Smith's paradoxical qualities. "He is a zealous Christian, yet edits, or did edit, the Progressive Christian, which proposed to abolish Christianity as now understood. He builds churches to keep out the clergy, and heads Christian conventions to put down Christian institutions." [4]

[4] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 133.

Among Smith's particular sins Fitzhugh noted his persistent attempts to buy slaves for the purpose of freeing them, and his promotion of an underground railroad in behalf of fugitives. He gave large sums to Northern emigration efforts to make Kansas a free state and had formerly taken an active part in the Liberty party. Among his spectacular and costly failures was a gigantic project to colonize former slaves in the Adirondacks. This novel environment appears to have been unsuited for the new freedmen coming from the plantation fields of the South. Smith had joined the antislavery crusade in 1835, but although intimate with Garrison he was less uncompromising; still, in 1851, he had openly aided the sensational Jerry rescue in Syracuse.[5]

Fitzhugh was probably aware of Smith's manifold activities as an advocate of temperance, vegetarianism, the women's rights movement, pacifism, the Sunday School movement, prison reform, particularly the abolition of capital punishment, religious rationalism, and anti-Masonry. Oppressed Greeks, Italians, and Irishmen abroad could count upon his active sympathy and support. In large part he was influenced by the crusading spirit of his militant cousin, Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

The visit passed off pleasantly. Fitzhugh learned that Smith, like Phillips, had come to the conclusion that the pulpit of the North stood in the way of reform and he seemed to imply that the pulpit must be destroyed. Among other topics they discussed Andrews, whose name apparently brought an ominous headshaking from Smith, who disliked the New Yorker's views on familial relations. Two years later Fitzhugh summarized his impressions of Smith. "He had the education and has the feelings and bearing of the Southerner. His father owned slaves, and a territory full of Indians, and he was reared as playmate and prince in their midst; hence, he has the proud humility of the Southerner,

[5] Ralph V. Harlow, "Gerrit Smith," in *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1928–1937), XVII, 270–71.

not the exacting and supercilious arrogance of the Northerner." [6] He rather liked Gerrit Smith for all the latter's millennialism. The New Yorker was later to show his compassion for a defeated South by furnishing bail to release Jefferson Davis from a Federal prison.

As the time approached for the New Haven engagement, considerable local speculation arose over the Fitzhugh-Phillips debate. Curiously enough, the instigator of this arrangement was a young Virginian, Moncure D. Conway of Falmouth, then visiting Connecticut. Conway was a cousin of John Moncure Daniel of the Richmond *Examiner* and had contributed occasional literary sketches to that journal and to the *Southern Literary Messenger.* A firm believer in radical Jeffersonianism, he had at one time gone to the extreme of attempting to demonstrate that the Negro was not a man in order to reconcile slavery with the Declaration of Independence. His reading, however, carried him in the opposite direction from the path taken by the pro-slavery school, despite the fact that he was born and reared in a plantation environment.[7]

In a conversation with Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire, a moderate antislavery leader who regarded slavery as anachronistic rather than a moral offense, Conway argued that "it was the most scholarly and philosophical of young men who discarded old Virginian principles and advocated slavery *per se.*" Hale and his friends then insisted that Conway persuade some such competent Southerner to lecture upon slavery on broad moral and sociological grounds. Among the sponsors of this request were evidently Mary Beecher Perkins, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, and her uncle, Samuel Foote, then in New Haven. Conway agreed and decided upon his former neighbor, George Fitzhugh, who, he believed, had written an able work in *Sociology for the South.* Thus it was that Conway's uncle, Eustace Conway, came to secure Fitzhugh's consent.

[6] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 137. [7] Conway, *Autobiography,* I, *passim.*

Fitzhugh was fortunate in speaking before a New Haven audience rather than in a less tolerant New England community. Various factors tended to enhance its hospitality to a Southern proslavery man. The carriage-making interests of New Haven were deeply involved in Southern trade. Local politicians reflected the moderation of a college community by avoiding extremism of any type. Among the twenty thousand inhabitants of whom less than a thousand were Negroes, only a negligible proportion had gone over to abolitionist candidates.[8] The high literacy rate of the people, leavened by the Yale influence, fostered an admiration for the abstract right of free speech.

The New Haven *Palladium,* an antislavery organ, wrote a generous introduction for Fitzhugh, hailing his lecture as "an epoch in the history of slavery discussion in the United States." The Virginian possessed views, according to the editor, which were influential in the South and he was the author of the "most vigorous and consistent work" on the proslavery side. He was recommended as a good speaker and a courteous gentleman who desired a calm discussion.[9] "He may rest assured," declared James F. Babcock, editor of the *Palladium,* "that he will be treated to no mobbing, or any invitation to leave the city, however radical may be the difference between his ideas and those of his auditors. We could hope that such a proffer of 'free discussion' may not be without its influence in opening a way for like encounters of reason and morality among our Southern brethren." [10]

New Haven had invited Fitzhugh to participate in a distinguished lecture series, known as the "People's Course of Lectures," held in Brewster's Hall where Ralph Waldo Emerson had discussed "English Civilization" on March 23,

[8] Edward E. Atwater (ed.), *History of the City of New Haven* (New York, 1887), 487; James D. B. De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (Washington, 1853), 78–82.

[9] New Haven *Daily Palladium,* March 15, 1855.

[10] *Ibid.,* quoted in Fredericksburg *News,* March 26, 1855.

just preceding Fitzhugh, and the talented minister, Henry Ward Beecher, had addressed an audience a few weeks previously on "Patriotism." [11] The manager, Joseph Sheldon, a Yale graduate who had distinguished himself as a lecturer, lawyer, and college instructor, had opened the series in 1854 chiefly with the desire to stimulate local intellectual life and to aid the antislavery cause. A social rebel by nature, he was to support every forlorn hope of a better day from Frémont in 1856 to Bryan forty years later.[12]

On the appointed evening, March 21, Fitzhugh began his address, "The Failure of Free Society," before a large and attentive audience which included not a few Yale professors, among them Benjamin Silliman, the famous geologist and chemist. Disappointed that Wendell Phillips had not yet arrived, he nevertheless decided to delay no longer, particularly since Phillips was not expected to speak until the following day in any case. Despite Fitzhugh's inexperience as a lecturer, which made him oblivious of the passing hours, the audience remained patient. He later wrote to a friend, "Although my lecture was double the usual length, and a metaphysical and statistical argument instead of an evening's entertainment (as they are used to), it was often applauded, and listened to politely throughout." [13]

Unlike other lectures the Fitzhugh speech was reported only in part, because it contained, according to the New Haven *Palladium,* "much assertion, much fog, and much nonsense, with many disgusting appeals to the perceptions of his hearers, intended to elicit responses 'from the heart.' " [14] The portion reproduced, running to several columns and intended as evidence of this nonsense, was nothing more or less than a verbatim account of the leading topics in

[11] New Haven *Weekly Palladium,* February 24, March 24, 1855.

[12] *Commemorative Biographical Record of New Haven County, Connecticut* (Chicago, 1902), 42–44.

[13] Fitzhugh to "G. C.," April 12, 1855, in Conway, *Autobiography,* I, 224–25.

[14] New Haven *Daily Palladium,* March 22, 1855.

Sociology for the South. This was particularly true of Fitzhugh's condemnation of Jeffersonian liberalism and his arguments for the natural origin of slavery. If the published part of the lecture is typical of the rest, it is clear that Fitzhugh made no attempt to prepare a special paper for his audience, but was content to use huge extracts from his book. The *Palladium* thus expressed its judgment:

> We run no risk in saying that his remarks, prolonged through two hours, excited a profound sensation. For the benefit of Southern friends who have been awaiting his reception, we add that he was listened to with fairness throughout the whole of his address. No one was convinced by his attempted arguments; many were amused by their novelty; a few were saddened that a man whom nature evidently intended for a genial gentleman, possessing common sense, and ordinary mental ability, should have the end of his production thwarted by the mere fact of t[r]opical location under the influences of slavery.

The editor went on to complain that it was difficult to get Fitzhugh's precise opinion on many points, except the general position that capital and free competition produced such abuses as to make slavery preferable. "These are old positions, and have so often been refuted as to need no comment. Those who support them forget that the abuses of free society are factitious, that they exist in spite of law, morality and benevolence, while those of slavery are inherent and legalized." [15] When the Fredericksburg *News* resentfully commented on the *Palladium* editorial that the Fitzhugh lecture was "casting pearls before swine," the New Haven editor had his retort ready. The speaker's treatment, he asserted, could compare only favorably with that with which an antislavery speaker would be met in Virginia at the hands of an audience whose "mobbishness" the gentlemanly qualities of Fitzhugh and the editor of the *News* would be powerless to restrain.[16]

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*, March 31, 1855.

In 1862, amidst the hatreds engendered by the Civil War, Conway, recalling Fitzhugh's speech, was even less flattering. "Fitzhugh's method of proving Free Society a failure was by theories and speculations which had got into crevices and under the eaves of his brain, like the bats in the rickety old mansion, situated on the fag-end of a once noble estate, in which he resided. This spot of 'the sacred soil' [Virginia] he had never left for a month, and of Free Society, of course, knew nothing." [17]

Fitzhugh, expecting a much worse reception, was actually pleased by the friendly attentions he received from various prominent New Haven citizens after the lecture: Joseph Sheldon congratulated him, remarking that no other lecture had ever occasioned so much talk and speculation—possibly a barbed compliment; Professor Silliman and others gave Fitzhugh their marked attentions.[18] This was, however, no evidence that the Virginian had made any converts, for shortly afterwards Silliman was privately expressing his distress over proslavery aggressiveness. In this conflict between freedom and slavery, he wrote to a friend, "I feel humbled and mortified for my country." [19]

On the morning following the lecture, bluff old Samuel Foote, favorite uncle of Harriet Beecher Stowe, called upon the Virginian in his carriage. Foote, a former sea captain, active in the China trade, had done much to encourage the literary aspirations of his numerous brood of Beecher nephews and nieces by bringing home from his voyages various well-chosen books and curiosities. His home in Cincinnati during the thirties had been the meeting place of the Semi-Colon Literary Club where the older Beechers could meet such rising individuals as Salmon P. Chase, Judge James Hall, editor of the *Western Magazine,* and Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz, who was ultimately to become a proslavery

[17] Conway (ed.), *Addresses and Reprints,* 112.

[18] Fitzhugh to Holmes, March 27, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.

[19] George P. Fisher, *Life of Benjamin Silliman* (New York, 1866), II, 265–66.

novelist despite the abolitionist atmosphere. Foote himself had considerable intellectual curiosity and a great deal of good-humored combativeness in such matters. He loved to shock the Beecher children by maintaining such propositions as that Turks were more honest than Christians.[20] To Conway, who knew him well, Foote was an "honest and noble man, if God ever made one."

That morning Foote evidently came with gentle malice in his heart, for he remarked simply that he was going to take Fitzhugh out to see how free society had failed. The Virginian acceded, undoubtedly in his usual gentle fashion, and Foote drove his willing victim through the beautiful environs of New Haven, taking care to point out houses and cottages, which, according to Conway, would be considered "marvels of elegance in Virginia." Foote informed his "thunder-stricken" companion that many of these mansions belonged to mechanics, and some even to day laborers.[21] They drove through all the streets of New Haven, for Foote was anxious to prove to his visitor, whom he regarded as impressionable, that there were no slums in the town and that even the poorest classes lived in neat, comfortable homes. Poor relief taxes were unnecessary despite the fact that New Haven's commerce had largely been transferred to New York and that the soil of the countryside was not naturally fertile. Free labor, alone, without the aid of government expenditures, had nevertheless created a stable, attractive community.

Fitzhugh's attention was called to the beautiful suburban village of Fair Haven, established and supported entirely upon the cultivation and traffic in oysters brought from Virginia, and planted in the flats near the mouth of the Quinnipiac River. Persistent and intelligent cultivation of the oyster beds by the various proprietors of the submerged

[20] Catherine Gilbertson, *Harriet Beecher Stowe* (New York, 1937), 17–18 *et passim*.

[21] Conway (ed.), *Addresses and Reprints*, 112–13; also in *id.*, *The Golden Hour* (Boston, 1862), 69–71.

lands had resulted in a general prosperity which was steadily increasing. As the Virginian observed these "proofs" that free society was not the failure he had imagined, he was visibly affected. According to an account which apparently originated with Foote, Fitzhugh admitted that he must modify his opinions on the subject of free labor.[22] That there were reservations in the Virginian's mind is clear from a comment he was to write the following year regarding this drive:

> When we were in New Haven, a distinguished abolitionist boasted to us that mechanics received two dollars per day for their labor, and, by their China trade, exchanged the products of one day's labor for twenty days' labor of the Chinese, who worked for ten cents a day. The New England mechanic was thus the master of twenty Chinese laborers, whose labor he commanded for one of his own day's labor. Here was an instance of individual, not of national exploitation. Well might China dread free trade.[23]

It was apparently on this same drive that Fitzhugh visited Yale University. Upon the beautiful landscape was erected a monument, which, according to the Virginian, commemorated the deeds of "a regicide, who had sought refuge in New-England, from that merited punishment with which he was threatened in England." He could feel no sympathy for the parliamentarians who had ordered the execution of their divine right king, Charles I. It seems Foote remarked that Southern students occasionally threw stones at the statue. "Thus," thought Fitzhugh, "is the quarrel kept up. The South sustains religion, order, subordination, law, and government." [24]

Undoubtedly elated by the results of his educational efforts, Foote then took the Southerner to his home at Windy

[22] John P. Foote, *Memoirs of the Life of Samuel E. Foote* (Cincinnati, 1860), 200–202.

[23] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 77–78.

[24] Fitzhugh, "The Northern Neck of Virginia," *loc. cit.*, 287.

Knowe to meet his niece, Mary Beecher Perkins, sister of the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and wife of a prominent insurance lawyer of Hartford. Mary, considered the "sensible" member of the Beecher family, was a far more circumspect bluestocking than her famous sister and Fitzhugh declared privately that he was "much pleased with her." [25] Foote, himself a heretic in many matters, enjoyed bringing people of diametrically opposed views to his hospitable mansion.

On the noon train Wendell Phillips arrived in New Haven from Boston, but overlooked his Virginia opponent in his preparations for the evening's lecture. Fitzhugh, however, sat among the audience in Brewster's Hall, listening attentively to the famous abolitionist, who had attracted national attention ever since his speech at Faneuil Hall in 1837, protesting the martyrdom of Elijah P. Lovejoy. Born of a wealthy, aristocratic family, educated in the law at Harvard, he had broken sharply with his past after his conversion to abolitionism and had given up his law practice because he could no longer sustain his oath as a lawyer to support the Constitution. His views on slavery were fully as uncompromising as Garrison's; he, too, favored agitation rather than political action to achieve emancipation. Like so many of the New England militants, he embraced such causes as women's rights, Irish freedom, and the abolition of capital punishment. After the slave was freed, Phillips was to transfer his mighty energies to the American labor movement.[26]

Phillips' lecture, the last of the series, attracted a large audience, who were "delighted and instructed for an hour and a quarter," according to the local press, as he spoke on "The Lost Arts." This marked his first discussion of slavery in Connecticut. With a gibe he disposed of his Southern opponent, whom he had not heard:

[25] Conway, *Autobiography*, I, 224–25.

[26] McAlister Coleman, "Wendell Phillips," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York, 1930–1935), XII, 117–18.

I rejoice especially to stand here and succeed the lecture you had last evening, for the highest attribute of a free society is that it allows men to speak fearlessly, and that society cannot be accounted a failure, although it should fail to give food to the hungry or shelter the desolate.

Last night you listened to a Virginian, defending Virginia and her institutions. When I and many more like me, are welcomed to Richmond, to defend New England and her institutions, without danger of the penitentiary, then may Massachusetts and Connecticut be weighed in the balance with Virginia. I shall not attempt to answer, at respectful length, the train of remarks, then addressed to you. It seems to me that it answers itself. At any rate, an hour spent upon either of the two hills that guard your city, the East and West Rock, looking down thence upon your population, its Christianity, its churches, upon every man therein the founder of his own fortunes, the head of his family household, training it up by the Bible, upon an industry that uses every drop of water ten times over before it lets it fall into the sea, upon an education that lifts up not only your own State, but spreads and runs through the nation —one hour, if spent there, tells us that he who can look at all this, and say it has failed, must look elsewhere than upon this earth for success. And he who looks backward upon the past and present of Virginia, and thinks that her sociality is sound, or that the ulcer eating into her prosperity is Free Trade and Slavery, is like the old sailor, who complaining of the effects of his grog, found the fault not in his rum, but in his water.[27]

Phillips, then conservative in economic questions, expressed a Calvinistic regard for the virtues of wealth-getting and free competition. "We live in a country," he declared, "where wealth is predominant. It is a function to amass it. I find no fault with this. . . . In free society, it is the antagonism of the poor man to the rich, that saves society and keeps it healthy. Under the rule of slavery, this is stricken out,—wealth exists, but no democracy. So Slavery has the power." The rest of his oration was a bitter attack

[27] New Haven *Weekly Palladium*, March 31, 1855.

on the neutral position of the Northern churches in the slavery controversy. "A Church at peace in the presence of oppression," he warned solemnly, "is not the Church of Christ. The Church that sees injustice and makes no protest—it cannot be the Church that has blessed Europe for nineteen centuries with civilization and morality."

If Fitzhugh's lecture did not stir up any controversy over free speech despite its strong advocacy of slavery and denunciation of Jeffersonianism, that of Wendell Phillips certainly did. The New Haven *Register,* a conservative Democratic paper, attacked the *Palladium* for publishing Phillips' strictures on the clergy and reviled the abolitionist for his criticism of the Constitution. To this the *Palladium* replied, "But why attack Mr. Phillips any more than Mr. Fitzhugh! The latter said that free institutions were a Failure! There is not a word of reproach for him by the Register or its sensitive correspondents." [28] In a subsequent editorial on "A Free Press," the *Palladium* pointed out that it had published Emerson's lecture in full, although it should feel "very sorry to be held for any of his doctrines." Nothing was said at this time, however, of its failure to reproduce Fitzhugh's speech completely. The editor went on to assert that there had not been "so much honest truth told to the citizens of New Haven in many years." To him Phillips was "one of the most splendid lecturers" he had ever heard.[29]

Fitzhugh's immediate reaction to Phillips' speech was severe condemnation. "His was an eloquent tirade against Church and State, Law and Religion," he remarked to a friend at this time. "It was flat treason and blasphemy—nothing else." [30] Subsequently, the Virginian recovered his customary urbanity and wrote in his book *Cannibals All!* "Mr. Phillips is, in private life, aside from his abolition and sectional prejudices, a worthy, accomplished gentleman. He is the most eloquent and graceful speaker to whom

[28] New Haven *Daily Palladium,* March 28, 1855. [29] *Ibid.*
[30] Conway, *Autobiography,* I, 224–25.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

FROM CARLOS MARTYN, *Wendell Phillips: The Agitator* (NEW YORK, 1890)

we ever listened. He seems to distill manna and ambrosia from his lips, but is all the while firing whole broadsides of hot shot." [31]

This New Haven education was taken very seriously by Fitzhugh, who discussed his favorite thesis with strangers in public conveyances and at hotels. Hospitable abolitionists entertained him and sent him off with their pamphlets, books, and speeches. In an open letter to the Richmond *Enquirer,* he described his experiences in the North:

> When I wrote that book [*Sociology for the South*], I believed that Government, Law, Religion, and Marriage, were victims bound and filleted for sacrifice by Northern abolition. What was then matter of doubtful opinion, inference and speculation, has become, since my trip to the North, subject of fixed faith and conviction. . . . It seemed to me, that in attempting to prove "Free Society a failure," in my lecture at New Haven, I was "but carrying coals to New Castle." The Liberty Party, at least, discovered that long before I did, and are as intent on subverting and re-constructing society at home, as on abolishing slavery with us.

Nothing, he said, impressed him so much as the "avowed infidelity" of many with whom he conversed, and the fact that the Christian beliefs of the rest were melting away similarly into disbelief. Religious and conservative elements remained silent and isolated. Atheists and Millennial Christians alike admitted the failure of free society and the former proposed a new social science to end all defects of the social system.[32] In a letter to a New Haven friend he wrote that one of the "most distinguished" of these conversants had told him that as a perpetual institution he preferred slavery to free society as then constituted. "You can't argue with such men," he complained half-seriously, "for they see facts in the future to sustain their views. I do not believe there is a Liberty man in the North who is not a Socialist." [33]

[31] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 374n.
[32] *Ibid.,* 147.
[33] Conway, *Autobiography,* I, 224–25.

As the train carried him through the New England countryside, he was struck, as Southerners were before him, by the sharp contrast of poverty-stricken fields alternating with magnificent towns and cities, palatial residences, huge factories, and prosperous stores and warehouses. The reflection forced itself upon him, he later wrote, that a change in the course of trade might make all this worthless, leaving the untenanted houses and poor lands as a sole reminder of another era. New England's prosperity seemed to him an unsubstantial fabric, reared on the temporary favor of capital and commerce in world trade. "Thinking of all this," he said, "and applying it to New England, we exclaimed—'YOUR WEALTH IS COSMOPOLITAN, YOUR POVERTY INDIGENOUS!' " [34]

These were the lessons Fitzhugh derived from his trip to the Northern states. From Andrews, Smith, Phillips, Foote, and the many others he had met, he obtained full confirmation of his earlier suspicions of abolitionist heterodoxy. His cherished theories regarding the exploitative nature of free trade and the sterile nature of commerce had insulated him against the subtle propaganda afforded by prosperous workmen's homes and widespread democratic provisions for popular education. He had unmasked the Northern humbug and was now prepared to proclaim his discovery to the South.

[34] George Fitzhugh, "Wealth of the North and the South," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIII (1857), 587.

Chapter X

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1856

THE Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, for all the good intentions of its author, Stephen A. Douglas, became the Pandora's box of sectional hatreds. Anti-Nebraska men, viewing the repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 as a slaveholder's conspiracy against the free Northern laborer, deserted the old political organizations for the rising Republican party. Northern Democrats, although profoundly shaken by the losses in the Congressional elections of 1854, might continue to hope for national victory by offering their Southern allies "Northern men with Southern principles"; but the Whigs found the old formula of substituting generals for party platforms in Presidential elections no longer adequate. The meteoric rise of the American, or Know-Nothing, party seemed to offer an energetic alliance to the battered Whigs, but this was to prove an illusion after the campaign of 1856. For the American party, times were out of joint to substitute successfully on the national scene a Protestant crusade for the antislavery movement.

Despite the relatively few Catholics and foreigners in the South, many Whig newspapers sounded the long-forgotten slogan of "No Popery!" This proved too attenuated an issue for other Whig papers which went over to the local Democracy. As the possibilities of a national Republican victory grew, a forced unanimity began to pervade the Southern press. Against Black Republicanism, warned the proslavery extremists, there was only the alternative of secession. The Frémont-Buchanan contest was to furnish a grim dress rehearsal for the bitter election of 1860.

The campaign of 1856 proved to be the most active one of Fitzhugh's career. He was chosen a member of the Democratic Vigilance Committee of Caroline County to promote the election of Buchanan.[1] He won a personal triumph by nominating and securing the unanimous caucus acceptance of his scholarly friend, Frederick W. Coleman, as candidate for state senator, a position to which he was ultimately elected by combined Democratic and Whig efforts.[2] The Fredericksburg *News* laid aside its Whig politics to endorse the "gigantic intellect" of Coleman.[3] He had expressed the dilemma of his state in a toast proposed at a large public gathering a year previously, "Virginia! The head of the South—God forbid that she should become, as I fear she will, the tail of the North." [4] His popularity as a teacher aided his candidacy materially.

As far as the American party was concerned Fitzhugh remained wary although not entirely aloof. As a party regular he refused to go over to the new camp; nevertheless, in the interest of harmony, he was willing to use his local prestige to support an able Democratic candidate, like Daniel C. Dejarnette, who flirted with the Know-Nothings at the same time. He disliked the anti-Catholic bias of the new party, although approving their nationalistic outlook.[5]

During the early part of 1855 Fitzhugh obtained an editorial position with the powerful Richmond *Enquirer* for the duration of the campaign. He had written occasionally for this paper before, but never for so consecutive a period. His kinsman, Dr. John Brockenbrough of the Virginia State Bank, had been one of the famous Richmond Junto which directed the policy of the *Enquirer* during its most influential period, the thirties. Old Tom Ritchie had founded the paper in 1804 at the behest of Jefferson and

[1] Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* March 14, 1856.
[2] Fredericksburg *News,* February 11, 1856.
[3] *Ibid.,* January 21, 1856. [4] *Ibid.,* February 12, 1855.
[5] Fitzhugh to the Editor, *ibid.,* May 1, 14, 1855.

for decades the *Enquirer* had been one of the most effective party organs in the United States to fashion national policy and solve patronage problems. Traditionally the "Democratic Bible," it had subscribed to the Jeffersonian principles of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, opposed the centralizing policies of Henry Clay as corrupt, and avoided the divisive tactics of Calhoun.

The Ritchie sons, together with Roger A. Pryor, were now directing the *Enquirer*. Thomas Ritchie, Jr., and his famous father both died in 1854, leaving Foushee and William F. Ritchie to continue the family policy. This may account for Fitzhugh's appointment at this time. The retiring citizen of Port Royal was in dashing, if distinguished, company, for the late Thomas Ritchie, Jr., had killed the editor of the Richmond *Whig* in a duel, and Pryor's passionate advocacy of militant party policies brought him frequently to the dueling field.[6] The *Enquirer,* while accepting the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, insisted that the idea of "squatter sovereignty" fathered by Lewis Cass and Douglas was "more odious than the Wilmot Proviso." [7] Pryor, who dominated editorial policy, worked secretly for the nomination of President Pierce, who was not intimately associated with these heresies; and his challenging attitude to those Democrats who wished another candidate almost precipitated a duel between himself and Hughes of the *Examiner.* Fortunately, friends intervened successfully.[8] Pryor became so closely identified with the demand in 1860–1861 for an attack on Fort Sumter that he was to be offered the honor of firing the first shot in the cause of the Confederacy, but he waived this privilege in favor of Edmund Ruffin. Yet, in 1886–1887 this secessionist, now an aged lawyer, argued in behalf of the rights of labor before the Federal Supreme Court as counsel for the alleged Haymarket anarchists.

[6] Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States* (New York, 1873), 269–71.

[7] Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* April 24, 1856.

[8] Fredericksburg *News,* April 24, 1856.

The *Enquirer* attempted to win over the old Whig element to the Democracy, insisting that no issue of principle in this campaign separated the parties. Free trade, strict construction, and state rights represented a banner sufficiently wide to cover all Southerners. A Southern Whig paper retorted that this statement was hypocritical, for the only stock in trade of the Democratic party in the South was the slavery issue, which it aggravated. Alluding to the *Enquirer's* intransigence towards the question of slavery in the territories, the Fredericksburg *News* charged, "The Democratic party . . . will dissolve the Union if it can't secure the privilege of carrying slaves to the North Pole." [9] At the same time the *Enquirer* was subjected to a concentrated fire from Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune* which regarded this paper as the leading representative of the Southern cause.

Fitzhugh began his task with a series of editorial articles on slavery, repeating much of his material from *Sociology for the South*. In an article on "Slavery Literature" he developed in detail Holmes's idea of the collapse of faith in all fields of speculation during the nineteenth century. At the same time, as his correspondence reveals, he expounded whatever newer ideas occurred to him regarding slavery and free society to his patient friend prior to publishing them.[10] Ultimately these editorials were to find their way into his second book, *Cannibals All!*

Slavery in the territories, as the stirring issue of the time to Fitzhugh, necessarily occupied much of his editorial effort. Proslavery writers assumed that Kansas would naturally fall to the South. "We do not wish to abolish free society," he wrote, "nor to prevent its introduction into a fair proportion of the New States, nor do we wish to introduce slavery into any state whose people exclude it when pre-

[9] *Ibid.*, October 6, 1856.

[10] Fitzhugh to Holmes, February 5, 1855, and another letter (n.d.), in Holmes Letter Book.

pared to be admitted as States." [11] Should squatter sovereignty exclude Southern institutions in one or two of the states, this would be an act of gross injustice to the South, but there would be no quarrel over abstractions so long as certain of the newer states retained slavery.

This was written before violence had broken out in Kansas and destroyed the Douglas compromise. Within a few months the situation had changed and Fitzhugh was demanding the intervention of the Federal government in the territories to guarantee the stake of the South in the face of violence and fraud. "State equality is all the South asks," he claimed. "Candor obliges us to say that the South has to recover lost ground. The principle of the Missouri Compromise was insulting and injurious to the South." [12] At home he secured the passage of a resolution by the Caroline Democrats demanding Federal protection of Southern interests in Kansas:

> Resolved, That Northern and Southern men may well differ as to which of their forms of society is preferable, but that the Federal Government, the common agent of both, should know no difference, but should adopt such measures as will equally protect the social organizations of the North and South.[13]

During March he pleaded with the conservatives of the North to support the South in their own self-interest. "If the North values its present social forms, it can only preserve them by close alliance with the South, for the South is all conservative and wishes to disturb no existing institutions," he declared. As for his own attacks on free society Fitzhugh explained that his motives were only to defend Southern institutions which required "showing up" the evils of Northern society. "All human institutions are attainted with evils," he admitted, evidently following the position laid down by his friend Holmes.

This editorial, particularly its appeal to Northern con-

[11] Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* January 24, 1856.
[12] *Ibid.,* March 19, 1856.
[13] *Ibid.,* April 21, 1856.

servatives, provoked the New York *Tribune*. The editor asked whether the *Enquirer* expected these conservatives to put down the rebellion in Kansas at the command of slaveholders. "Yet we do not doubt," the *Tribune* wrote, "that plenty of fools can be found at the South who believe that the same tools, who were used to do the dirty work of slavery in the Nebraska business, can be made to stand up in the North and fight against Freedom at the bidding of the slaveholders. All such had better dismiss this notion at once. The Doughface does not fight." The editor had in mind certain conservatives whom he labeled the "matchless trinity of New England renegades—Pierce, Douglas, and Cushing." [14]

Fitzhugh's article on the forthcoming Southern Commercial Convention of 1856 at Savannah attracted considerable attention for its implied criticism of free trade. Using the arguments of his book, he pointed out that no "country" in the world possessed such abundant elements of national independence as the South; yet none, so advanced in civilization, ever relied so fully on foreign skill and foreign production for the ordinary necessaries of life. The South must diversify its interests, attract industry and commerce. He hoped that Southern ships, engaging in Southern commerce with Asia, Africa, and southern California, might replace much of the dependence on Northern vessels and European markets. This, he felt, was the task of the convention.[15]

The New York *Tribune* took a peculiar delight in castigating this particular editorial, thus renewing the feud with the *Enquirer*. A lengthy discussion, studded with quotations from Fitzhugh's article, lampooned the effectiveness of the Southern commercial conventions and the sincerity of the editor's desire for industrial diversification. "In the absence of Burton's Theatre and the jolly comedian who presides

[14] New York *Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1856.
[15] Richmond *Daily Enquirer*, January 28, 1856.

there, a Southern convention is the next best joke that we know of," the *Tribune* sneered. It went on to satirize the long ponderous discourses delivered at these conventions on such topics as the settlement of "that stupendous geographic bore, Amazonia." The *Tribune* had a particular reason for disliking the conventions, since its reporter had been voted out of his seat the year before by the membership. As for the diversification program of Fitzhugh the protectionist editor replied, "Did it [the South] ever utter any but Free-trade fallacies? Did it ever recognize the truth that there must be compensations introduced to qualify the inferiority of a young country starting in the manufacturing race with an old one?" Finally, the editor asked how Virginia expected to diversify her economic life when no one respected mechanical industry on account of the existence of slavery.[16] Thereafter, the *Tribune* continued to dwell on the decadence of Virginia and its desperate attempts to escape an impending doom.

Fitzhugh, on his part, remembered to include Greeley's name whenever he required illustrations of subversive elements in society, representative of socialism, atheism, and free love. Greeley might angrily deny these imputations but the charges were repeated in the *Enquirer* and elsewhere. The Virginian continued to preach a diversified South with free schools for all whites, and a loyal college and academy system, generously endowed by Southerners. "Do not let us continue to drive abroad our most influential men to obtain educations which, when acquired, will weaken their attachment for their native State," he pleaded.[17] Immigration also must be encouraged or the South would cease to expand; capital was worthless without labor. Virginia, particularly, must lay the necessary taxes to support a system of internal improvements with the West and Northwest, thus promoting the goal of eco-

[16] New York *Daily Tribune,* January 30, 1856.
[17] Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* February 1, 1856.

nomic independence. Once the South showed its disposition to withdraw tribute from the North, insults and injustice would cease.[18]

The victory of Nathaniel P. Banks of Massachusetts in February, 1856, in the long-deadlocked contest for the Speakership of the House of Representatives created a minor crisis in the South. Banks, recently elected as a Know-Nothing, but soon to become a Republican, had denounced the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as an act of dishonor, and had asserted that if selected Speaker, he would not permit the South to reap benefit from repeal. His victory, promoted by an antislavery coalition, was regarded as a major defeat for the South.

Fitzhugh wrote one of his most vehement editorials in protest against the choice of Banks, arguing that Congress was now under the direction of men pledged to measures which, if carried out, would inevitably dissolve the Union. The Black Republicans, imbued by the destructive ideals of Proudhon and Andrews, threatened social revolution, beginning with a program to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. "Neither honor nor self-interest," he warned, "would permit the South to continue political connections with a people, a majority of whom through their representatives had taken part with their slaves against their masters—with a people who had stigmatized them as inferior and wicked men at the same time that they robbed them of the territory acquired by the wisdom of their statesmen and the valor of their soldiers." [19]

The similarity of Fitzhugh's "house-divided" doctrines to those of Lincoln and Seward has already been noted. When the Virginian repeated in the Richmond *Enquirer* of May 6, 1856, the idea he had previously expressed in *Sociology for the South* that the United States would ultimately cease to be divided as between liberty and slavery,

[18] *Ibid.*, February 26, 1856.

[19] *Ibid.*, February 8, 1856.

and become one thing or the other, the editorial caught Lincoln's attention, and was ultimately translated during 1858 into the superb prose of the future Emancipator. The charges of Douglas regarding the provocative nature of Lincoln's house-divided address, the "irrepressible conflict" speeches of Seward, and similar affirmations by Congressman John Hickman of Pennsylvania, brought a reply from Lincoln in his Cincinnati speech of September 17, 1859, which indicates the influence of Fitzhugh's editorial:

"But neither I, nor Seward, nor Hickman," he remarked, "is entitled to the enviable or unenviable distinction of having first expressed that idea. That same idea was expressed by the Richmond 'Enquirer' in Virginia, in 1856, quite two years before it was expressed by the first of us." Unaware of Fitzhugh's authorship of the unsigned editorial, Lincoln erroneously attributed it to Pryor, the chief editor, and pointed out sardonically that Douglas had actually rewarded Pryor by giving the management of a party newspaper in Washington to one who had originally used "so unpatriotic and heretical" an expression.[20] As a matter of fact, Pryor, on a later occasion, expressed his dislike for the irrepressible conflict attitude.[21]

Fitzhugh's editorial of May 6, "South Carolina and the Union," to which Lincoln was indebted, suggested the outline of the house-divided speech. Alluding to a threat of certain Southerners to bring about secession in the event of Frémont's election, Fitzhugh pointed out that political disunion would not bring about "intellectual disunion." World public opinion, manufactured by Western Europe as the center of thought for Christendom, would create an overwhelming current certain to submerge Southern in-

[20] John G. Nicolay and John Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works* (New York, 1894), I, 567–68. This statement was repeated in the Kansas speeches of December, 1859, and in the New Haven speech of March 6, 1860. *Ibid.*, 590, 624.

[21] Roger A. Pryor, *Essays and Addresses* (New York, 1912), 25.

stitutions unless some countercurrent, originating in the South, could be set up. Then followed the striking passage which had evidently attracted Lincoln's eye:

> Social forms so widely differing as those of domestic slavery, and (attempted) universal liberty, cannot long co-exist in the Great Republic of Christendom. They cannot be equally adapted to the wants and interests of society. The one form or the other must be very wrong. . . . The war between the two systems rages everywhere; and will continue to rage till the one conquers and the other is exterminated. . . . We do not hope, nor wish to see slavery like ours introduced at the North. There is no room for the black slaves, and we never wish to see white men made slaves. But we do hope, and expect, and believe that conservative men everywhere are about to adopt the principle that men should be governed, not "Let Alone," and that each one should be governed according to his wants, and moral and intellectual capacity.[22]

Nor is Fitzhugh's authorship of this editorial identified by internal evidence alone, for substantially these ideas appear in his article published at the same time in *De Bow's Review*, "The Counter-Current, or Slavery Principle." After repeating the observations made in the *Enquirer* editorial regarding the pervasive influence of a universal public opinion upon the South, he concluded that the controversy was between Southern society and "some fanatical, sensual, or infidel form of socialism." [23] Repetition of this idea, as will be noted, occurs throughout Fitzhugh's writings.

Lincoln's law partner, Henry C. Whitney, afterwards recalled that the *Enquirer*'s editorial had "forcibly attracted his [Lincoln's] attention." In fact, the onetime railsplitter was a regular subscriber to the Richmond newspaper, depending largely upon this together with the Charleston

[22] Richmond *Enquirer*, May 6, 1856. That this is the editorial referred to by Lincoln is also certain from the evidence of Henry C. Whitney, *Lincoln, the Citizen* (New York, 1908), I, 267.

[23] George Fitzhugh, "The Counter-Current, or Slavery Principle," in *De Bow's Review*, XXI (1856), 90–95.

Mercury to gauge the drift of popular sentiment in the South.[24] On December 10, 1856, two years before the famous Springfield address, Lincoln addressed a Republican banquet in Chicago in words revealing not only the influence of Fitzhugh's significant editorial of May 6 but also of another regarding "state equality." Lincoln began with an attack on the recent message of President Pierce which hailed the Presidential victory of the Democrats as a popular mandate and charged that the Republican party sought to alter the domestic institutions of the states and to deprive the Constitution and the laws of moral authority. This, the speaker branded as an "unmixed and unmitigated falsehood" and in phrases containing the essential house-divided reasoning, he asserted:

Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion can change the government practically just so much. Public opinion, on any subject, always has a "central idea," from which all its minor thoughts radiate. That "central idea" in our political public opinion at the beginning was, and until recently has continued to be, "the equality of men." And although it has always submitted patiently to whatever of inequality there seemed to be as matter of actual necessity, its constant working has been a steady progress toward the practical equality of all men. The late presidential election was a struggle by one party to discard that central idea and to substitute for it the opposite idea that slavery is right in the abstract, the workings of which as a central idea may be the perpetuity of human slavery and its extension to all countries and colors. Less than a year ago the Richmond "Enquirer," an avowed advocate of slavery, regardless of color, in order to favor his views, invented the phrase "State equality," and now the President, in his message, adopts the "Enquirer's" catch-phrase, telling us the people "have asserted the constitutional equality of each and all of the States of the Union as States." The President flatters

[24] Whitney, *Lincoln, the Citizen,* I, 267; William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln: The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, 1908?), II, 363.

himself that the new central idea is completely inaugurated; and so indeed it is, so far as the mere fact of a presidential election can inaugurate it.

He pointed out that the anti-Buchanan vote was in a majority of 400,000, split by Frémont and Fillmore. "Can we not come together for the future?" he asked. Then in words clearly revealing Fitzhugh's influence, he pleaded, "Let every one who really believes, and is resolved, that free society is not and shall not be a failure, and who can conscientiously declare that in the past contest he has done only what he thought best—let every such one have charity to believe that every other one can say as much. Thus let bygones be bygones." He concluded with the hope that the declaration of state equality would be replaced by a better one, human equality.[25]

The reader of Fitzhugh, acquainted with his reiterated theory of the centrifugal force of a rising public opinion, recognizes in the house-divided speech of 1858 a familiar idea:

> "A House divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.[26]

Lincoln, in common with Fitzhugh, did not mean that free society and slavery must meet inevitably in bloody combat. Rather, as is demonstrable in both cases, the two believed that the basic incompatibility of freedom and slavery must be finally resolved by the steady and peaceful

[25] Nicolay and Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works,* I, 255.
[26] *Ibid.,* 240.

process of a dominant public opinion sweeping across an increasingly integrated nation. Lincoln and Fitzhugh, both, spoke of a "central idea," which, they believed, was destined to determine the guiding principle of Western civilization. There is no convincing evidence that Lincoln's central idea, promoted by public opinion, was considered by him to be a product of economic forces, rather than social and moral factors. Fitzhugh, however, was more inclined to accept a modified form of economic determinism.[27]

Although Lincoln supposed that the *Enquirer*'s editorials were written by Pryor, he was quite familiar with Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South.* William Herndon, Lincoln's associate, once purchased the book for their mutual edification. "This aroused the ire of Lincoln more than most pro-slavery books," he recalled in later years.[28] However indignant Lincoln might have been, he took care to study its arguments if only for the purpose of refutation. His writings and speeches of 1854, particularly, reveal the contentions of *Sociology for the South,* but without mentioning the author's name. In one paper on slavery of that year Lincoln began with Fitzhugh's statement of the novelty of governments based on equal rights, and examined the contention that the "ignorant and vicious"—Fitzhugh's favorite phrase—made self-government impracticable; he concluded by referring to the "experiment" of the "weak to grow stronger, the ignorant wiser, and all better and happier together." [29] These familiar phrases were scarcely fortuitous.

In Lincoln's Peoria address of that year, which bristles with suggestions from Fitzhugh's book, the speaker turned a number of the latter's phrases against him. Fitzhugh had

[27] Professor Arthur C. Cole's brilliant analysis of the house-divided speech is well worth study for its interpretation of this address in terms of "class war." See Cole, *Lincoln's House-Divided Speech: Did It Reflect a Doctrine of Class Struggle?* (Chicago, 1923).

[28] Herndon to Weik, October 28, 1885, in Emanuel Hertz (ed.), *The Hidden Lincoln* (New York, 1938), 96.

[29] Nicolay and Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works,* I, 178.

asserted that the middle classes exercised a despotic power equivalent to the "divine right of kings"; Lincoln reversed this accusation by applying it to Douglas and the slaveholders. Again, the Virginian had marveled over the fact that man's selfishness and self-interest could be sublimated into something as beautiful as the master and slave relationship; Lincoln transformed the idea completely into a house-divided antithesis, "Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it in his love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism, and when brought into collision so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow." [30] Like Fitzhugh, however, Lincoln believed that there was a physical difference between white and black which would forbid social equality and both agreed that the superior position between the races be assigned the white.[31] Lincoln's own Virginia heritage explains in part his sympathetic attitude to certain contentions of the South.

The biographer, Albert J. Beveridge, noted that Lincoln frequently adopted the device in his speeches during 1856–1859 of regarding Fitzhugh's ideas as typical of the slavery press and fairly indicative of the sinister designs of the slaveholders. This tactic was particularly evident in Lincoln's newspaper campaign. During the election of 1856 the *Illinois State Journal,* a Lincoln organ, reprinted several of Fitzhugh's *Enquirer* articles under the caption, "The Buchanan Democracy Hates Freedom." Indicative of Fitzhugh's peculiar style and extreme expressions is the fact that, although his articles usually appeared anonymously, the antislavery forces gravitated naturally to them, recognizing their high propaganda value. On one occasion Herndon conspired with Lincoln to publicize one of the Virginian's dicta that the enslavement of either whites or blacks was justifiable and right. At Herndon's instance a small proslavery newspaper of Springfield was prevailed upon to re-

[30] *Ibid.,* 180–205. [31] *Ibid.,* 369–70.

print the *Enquirer*'s article. Thereafter Lincoln and his antislavery associates enjoyed fair game by calling the attention of their section to the depravities of the Democrats in their midst.[32]

Not only did Fitzhugh unwittingly give aid and comfort to the Illinois Republicans, but his paradoxical expressions, torn from their context, assisted other Frémont forces as well, which were eager to demonstrate that the South intended to introduce slavery into the free states. On the leaflets distributed by Frémont Clubs appeared Fitzhugh's favorite assertion: "Slavery is the natural and normal condition of the laboring man, whether white or black." This was presented as typical of the Southern mind.

Hardly more circumspect were Fitzhugh's editorial associates, Pryor and the Ritchies. One article of October, 1856, which was gratefully accepted by the New York *Tribune* as a "sample" of the *Enquirer*'s position, read, "It is because we love this Union and would preserve it, because we believe a large majority at the North love it better than they love Frémont, free niggers, free lands, or free love, that we warn them, day by day, that to elect Frémont is to dissolve the Union." [33] To this the *Tribune* retorted, "Who wouldn't be in favor of the Union if he could have everything his own way in it?" Even more extreme was the *Enquirer*'s reaction to the assault on Sumner. He and his friends must be punished and silenced, declared the editor. "Either such wretches must be hung or put in the penitentiary, or the South should prepare at once to quit the Union." [34]

As the excitement grew before election day even the Richmond *Whig,* traditional rival of the *Enquirer,* struck hands with its former enemy and hinted darkly that if

[32] Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809–1858* (Boston, 1928), II, 30–31. Beveridge himself was not aware of the fact that almost all of the *Enquirer* editorials that he cites here were written by Fitzhugh.

[33] New York *Daily Tribune,* October 13, 1856.

[34] Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* June 9, 1856.

the South could not find justice and safety with her "Yankee brethren," the time might come for the Southern states to join the British Empire.[35] Prominent Southerners, particularly of the rising African slave trade party, added their threats of secession in the event of a Frémont victory. Preston S. Brooks, who had almost caned Senator Sumner to death a few months before, spoke before a celebration given in his honor at Ninety Six, South Carolina, and declared to an enthusiastic audience, which included Governor James Adams and other high officials, that the issue had now arrived. The South could only respond to this, he said, by trampling the Federal Constitution under foot and forming a Southern confederacy.[36]

Fitzhugh clung intermittently to a pro-Union stand, for all his intransigence of phrase. However much he desired Southern nationalism, he did not wish to see the Union rent, believing that the two could be reconciled. Treason, rebellion, revolution, and disunion were awful things, he said, no matter how they were disguised. "Besides," he asked in one of his infrequent outbursts of American patriotism, "what heart so cold, what mind so dull, as to be insensible to the progress and the glory of United America?" [37] Still, he seemed shaken by conflicting ideals, for in another editorial he insisted that the South could not continue in the Union another year should the Black Republicans acquire ascendancy. The fact of his normally pro-Union sentiments, however, suggests that the latter threat of disunion was intended as a salutary bluff for propaganda ends.

Appreciative correspondents in the *Enquirer* praised Fitzhugh's championship of his section. One writer requested that "a number of zealous friends of the good cause of order and humanity" should put their means to-

[35] New York *Daily Tribune,* October 15, 1856.
[36] *Ibid.,* October 9, 1856.
[37] Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* August 29, 1856.

gether to purchase all the unsold copies of *Sociology for the South* and then distribute them. It was also suggested that a committee of these purchasers confer with the author on the subject of abridging his volume into a pamphlet for popular use.[38]

Had Fitzhugh signed his editorials in the *Enquirer,* which were so widely disseminated in the North, it is likely that he might have become the recognized symbol of Southern aggression despite his disinclination for such a role. As it was, the *Enquirer* attained a fresh reputation for militancy, and the editors, for all their protestations of devotion to the Union, made the path of the peacemakers infinitely more difficult. Both sections, armed by their journalists with the wrath of a righteous cause, found moderation mere weakness and complete honesty, betrayal. However pacific might be the motives of the propagandists, the consequences of their action were far otherwise. The hatred aroused in the Presidential election of 1856 served to convince many, North and South, that only a mere respite had been won for an inevitable ordeal by battle.

[38] *Ibid.,* September 11, 1856.

Chapter XI

THE BIRTH OF *CANNIBALS ALL!*

THE election excitement of 1856 in the South did not end in November. During the weeks preceding election day began one of the most remarkable psychological phenomena in Southern history. This was an unreasoning panic felt simultaneously among the population of every state south of the Ohio, arising from widespread reports of a universal slave insurrection set for the Christmas holidays. Intense interest in the election results was noted among the slaves, and upon the defeat of the antislavery party rumors broke out that the Negroes were now determined to be masters of their own destiny. Beginning with the alleged discovery of slave plots during the autumn months in certain Texas counties, credited from evidence taken under torture, panic spread to almost every slaveholding community in the South. Abolitionists residing in this section who were charged with promoting incendiary propaganda, were driven into flight and in some instances lynched. Hundreds of Negroes were arrested, others hanged, on the flimsiest of evidence.[1]

Virginia shared fully in the common contagion. An alleged plot reported at Williamsburg among discontented slaves shook the community and resulted in many arrests. A similar tale came from Montgomery County.[2] In New Kent County a slave named Beverly, belonging to Sarah Crump, was declared guilty of inciting an insurrection

[1] Harvey Wish, "The Slave Insurrection Panic of 1856," in *Journal of Southern History* (Baton Rouge), V (1939), 206–22.

[2] Baltimore *Sun*, December 13, 1856.

and was condemned to be hanged.[3] In Millwood, Clark County, confessions established a plot of free Negroes and slaves which involved Harpers Ferry—a striking forerunner of John Brown's historic deed. These Negroes told the court that "they had heard white men and negroes talking [that] if Frémont was elected they would be free, and as they knew he was not, they were prepared to fight for it." [4] The citizens of Alexandria and other parts of Fairfax County seemed to have had an exceptionally severe fright over these alleged slave plots; students of the town's theological seminary formed a special patrol. The Mayor of Alexandria forbade all Negro meetings, meanwhile strengthening the pass system.

Governor Wise received numerous pleas for aid against threatened insurrection and sent arms upon request to the counties of Fauquier, King and Queen, Culpeper, Rappahannock, and the towns of Lynchburg, Petersburg, and Gordonsville.[5] In one instance, in response to popular pressure, he sent state forces to arrest forty Negroes at a festival which subsequently proved to be an innocent affair.[6] During the Christmas holidays when many waited anxiously for the lightning to strike, citizens of Louisa, Spotsylvania, and Orange counties met to organize a vigilance committee to whip and drive off all gypsies, peddlers, sellers of spirits to slaves, and all suspicious itinerants in that section of the county.[7]

The Richmond *Examiner* of January 23, 1857, published an editorial, widely quoted elsewhere, demanding that the free Negroes of the South be either exiled or enslaved on the ground that they were a constant danger in

[3] Fredericksburg *News,* January 15, 1857.

[4] Baltimore *Sun,* December 27, 1856.

[5] Henry W. Flournoy (ed.), *Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836–1869* (Richmond, 1893), XI, 50.

[6] Baltimore *Sun,* December 16, 1856; *Virginia Traveller,* December 15, 1856, quoted in Boston *Liberator,* December 19, 1856.

[7] Fredericksburg *News,* January 26, 1857.

organizing insurrections and setting a bad example of freedom to dissatisfied slaves.[8] From the Richmond *Enquirer,* commenting on the similarity of the Southern slave plots, came this warning statement, "These are not the wild and visionary projects with which negroes may be disposed to amuse themselves in the most quiet communities, but the maturely prepared, and, in some instances, the partially executed plans of a deliberate and widespread purpose of revolt." [9]

Most Southern newspapers agreed in attributing the simultaneous discovery of slave plots throughout the South to the election excitement and to abolitionist propaganda. "The idea, no doubt," explained the New York *Herald,* "was that with Frémont's election all the negroes of the South would be instantly emancipated or supported from the North in a bloody revolt." [10] The Nashville *Union and American* declared: "The recent Presidential canvass has had a deleterious effect on the slave population. The negroes manifested an unusual interest in the result; and attended the political meetings of the whites in large numbers." This editorial concluded with a demand for watchfulness against Northern fanatics and enemies at home.[11] Many of the newspapers encouraged the formation of vigilance committees on the popular California model and these appeared everywhere during the panic.

Fitzhugh seemed unshaken by these developments, although he was compelled to take editorial notice of them in the *Enquirer.* No events in history, he assured his readers, were so rare as slave insurrections and nothing was more common than the insurrection of labor against capi-

[8] Quoted in Boston *Liberator,* February 27, 1857.

[9] Quoted in *Annual Reports of the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1857–1858* (New York, 1858), 77.

[10] New York *Herald,* December 11, 1856.

[11] Quoted in Boston *Liberator,* December 12, 1856. Similar testimony appears in Memphis *Visitor,* Lexington (Ky.) *Observer and Reporter,* Baltimore *American,* and even Manchester *Guardian* of England.

tal. "The cities of New York and Boston are in far greater danger from the insurrection of labor against capital, than the South is of servile insurrection," he asserted.[12] This type of argument, following the propagandistic tradition of Thomas R. Dew, who minimized the dangers of insurrection, proved Fitzhugh's main resource against the abolitionist charges that the slaveholder's society rested on a volcano of Negro unrest.

At the same time, in writing for *De Bow's Review,* he showed that he was entirely familiar with the prevalence of slave insurrections in ancient societies. Speaking of Crete and Sparta, he wrote, "They were forced to lead a military and camp life, as well as to keep down insurrections of their too numerous slaves as to be ready at all times to repel attacks from without." [13] This was only the inconsistency of the propagandist. "Agitation for the South and her institutions is now the obvious duty of every patriot," he had written months before.[14]

That year Fitzhugh began his fruitful literary connection with James D. B. De Bow, in whose famous *Review,* published in New Orleans, the Virginian was to find a ready outlet for his prolific theories during the ensuing decade. De Bow became an enthusiastic supporter of his contributor, and accepted much of Fitzhugh's program as his own, particularly the proposals made to achieve Southern nationalism. His experience as superintendent of the Federal census made him keenly sensitive to the relative decline of his section, and the *Review* became one of his chief instruments to awaken the South. He called for Southern teachers to replace Northerners below Mason and Dixon's line, aided by school books written and published at home, and for the promotion of an indigenous Southern literature; watering places of fashion like those

12 Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* October 22, 1856.

13 George Fitzhugh, "Centralization and Socialism," in *De Bow's Review,* XX (1856), 693.

14 Richmond *Daily Enquirer,* March 27, 1856.

of Virginia were to replace the "Newports and Saratogas" of the North; and Southern commercial conventions were to be the grand instrument of a diversified South, able to meet industrial as well as agricultural competitors.[15]

De Bow's Review, in common with most ante-bellum journals of the South, was compelled to remind its subscribers publicly that their payments were long past due. In 1857 outstanding Southern magazines like the *Southern Literary Messenger* and the *Southern Quarterly Review,* as well as De Bow's own journal, were reminding their readers that there could be no Southern literature without the patronage of that section. In a sympathetic article, written on the occasion of a desperate appeal for aid by the *Southern Quarterly Review,* the editor of the New York *Herald* pointed out that despite the unusual literary aptitudes of many Southerners, their journals were dying simply because subscribers would not pay what they owed.[16]

Fitzhugh's most frequent theme at this time in *De Bow's Review* dealt with the necessity of creating an independent Southern literature. "It is all important that we should write our own books," he insisted. "It matters little who makes our shoes." [17] The response was not encouraging, for the South overawed by Northern and European literary prestige gave its patronage to the Yankee. Southern textbooks like William G. Simm's *Geography* and his *History of South Carolina,* M. M. Mason's *The Southern First Class Book,* and Jasper Adam's *Elements of Moral Philosophy* made little money for their authors. On the other hand, Northern books like Peter Parley's histories and various New England geographies and readers, either hostile or indifferent to the South and its institutions, had earned large fortunes below the Potomac and Ohio, ac-

[15] James D. B. De Bow, "The Rights, Duties, and Remedies of the South," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIII (1857), 225–38.

[16] *Id.,* "Southern Literary Discouragement—Our Subscribers," *ibid.,* 102.

[17] George Fitzhugh, "Southern Thought," *ibid.,* 341.

cording to a critic in *De Bow's Review.* The *Columbian Orator,* a Northern elementary reader hostile to slavery, was a source of irritation to state rights men with its "sickly sentimentalism" for the slave. Yet, an entire generation of Southerners reaching maturity on the eve of the Civil War had been reared on the antislavery precepts of that textbook.

Especially scandalous was the fact that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold well in the South; and magazine subscribers from this section somehow managed to support *Harper's Weekly, Godey's Magazine, Graham's,* and *Blackwood's,* while putting their own journals on short rations. The situation was the same regarding newspapers. "Where is the newspaper South," asked a discouraged South Carolinian, "whose circulation in a week will begin to compare with that of the political weather-cock of the New York Herald in a day?" The writer recommended legislative subsidies for Southern publishers as a corrective measure.[18]

Hinton Rowan Helper of North Carolina, whose *Impending Crisis of the South* shocked his section in 1857 because he attacked slavery as detrimental to the Southern white masses, wrote bitterly of the current movement for a Southern nationalist literature. "Thank God," he declared, "a 'Southern literature,' in the sense intended by the champions of slavery, is a simple impossibility, rendered such by that exility of mind which they demand in its producers as a prerequisite to admission into the guild of Southern authorship."[19] Helper anticipated the discovery of a later generation that propaganda, under na-

[18] "A South Carolinian," "Education at the South," *ibid.,* XXI (1856), 650–59. An extremely useful analysis of this type of nationalism appears in Jay B. Hubbell, "Literary Nationalism in the Old South," in David K. Jackson (ed.), *American Studies in Honor of William Kenneth Boyd* (Durham, N.C., 1940), 175–220.

[19] Hinton R. Helper, *The Impending Crisis of the South, and How to Meet It* (New York, 1857), 400.

tionalist or Marxist auspices, was impotent to produce a proslavery, Aryan, or proletarian literature.

In a discussion of Southern economic self-sufficiency, Fitzhugh explained that he wished a diversified rather than an exclusively industrial South. "Cotton is king," he said, with the optimism of that decade, "and rice, sugar, Indian corn, wheat, and tobacco, are his chief ministers." Impressed by the rising world demand for semitropical products, he believed that the South held a political as well as economic weapon in her large agricultural surplus which, he asserted, "gives us power, commands respect, and secures independence." Commerce and industry should be fostered only on so gradual a scale as not to affect the size of the agricultural surplus. Besides, foreigners could not buy from the South unless that section bought from them.[20]

Fitzhugh's articles in the *Enquirer* and *De Bow's Review* reflected new literary plans and were ultimately to be woven into the pattern of *Cannibals All!* With the idea of developing certain of his proslavery theories for a second book, Fitzhugh had continued a correspondence with various abolitionists during 1855–1856. He began an exchange of letters in January, 1856, with A. Hogeboom of Madison County, New York; these were published in the *Liberator,* the Richmond *Enquirer* and *Examiner,* the Fredericksburg *News, De Bow's Review,* and elsewhere. Hogeboom had begun with an attack on *Sociology for the South* which brought a long open letter from Fitzhugh in the *Liberator.* After pointing out the various authorities such as Carlyle and the contributors to the British reviews for the failure of competitive society, he went on to ask rhetorically:

How comes it that your distinguished neighbor, Gerrit Smith, proposes to make lands as free for the enjoyment of all as air

[20] Fitzhugh, "Southern Thought," *loc. cit.,* 337–49.

and water? Confessedly, because the despotism of capital over labor is *intolerable*. Confessedly, because your form of society is found to be a failure in practice! Why does another distinguished abolitionist, Mr. Goodell, of New York, in his book, on the Democracy of Christianity, declare, that wealth now is more cruel, oppressive and *murderous* than Feudal masters? Why does Mr. Greely [*sic*] advocate the doctrine of Fourier, and propose to subvert your society and reconstruct it from top to bottom, making a sort of common property of women and children, as well as of lands and houses? . . .

Why have you Bloomer's and Women's Right's men, and strong-minded women, and Mormons, and anti-renters, and "vote myself a farm" men, Millerites, and Spiritual Rappers, and Shakers, and Widow Wakemanites, and Agrarians, and Grahamites, and a thousand other superstitious and infidel isms at the North? . . . Why all this, except that free society is a failure? Slave society needs no defence till some other permanently practicable form of society has been discovered. . . .

Should you not, therefore, abolish your form of society, and adopt ours, until Mr. Greely, or Brigham Young, or Mr. Andrews, or Mr. Goodell, or some other socialist of Europe or America, invents and puts into successful practice, a social organization better than either, or until the millen[n]ium does actually arrive?

Fitzhugh ended by asking several questions which centered about one point: Did not all authority, history, and observation prove the superiority of slave society over free? He declared his intention was to use this correspondence as an occasion to challenge the North to deny that free society was a failure.[21] This letter was praised by the *Enquirer* as a "bold and able reply."[22]

Hogeboom arranged for the publication of the correspondence in a forty-page pamphlet, issuing one thousand copies during March, 1857. The Virginian first sent his manuscript to Gerrit Smith for comment and replied to Hogeboom:

[21] *Id., Cannibals All!* 150–53.
[22] Richmond *Enquirer,* January 29, 1856.

All I ask is, that the people in free society should investigate the history and statistics of such society (which is but a very small and short-lived experiment) ascertain that it has improved the moral, social, intellectual and physical condition of the liberated class, or at least has redounded to "the greater good of the greatest number" before they attempt to force us to try the same experiment.[23]

He refused, however, to co-operate with the abolitionist in circulating the pamphlet in the South—leaving an unfortunate inference.[24]

In this series of open letters addressed to various abolitionists, Fitzhugh succeeded in each case in attracting considerable attention to his announcement of *Cannibals All!* and in obtaining a lengthy review of his book shortly after publication. He was determined that the North should not again ignore his challenge to free society, hoping that this attack might divide conservatives and radicals of that section. On July 18, 1856, he wrote to William L. Garrison, editor of the *Liberator,* an abolitionist journal to which Fitzhugh subscribed at this time, announcing *Cannibals All!* and inviting discussion.

We live in a dangerous crisis, and every patriot and philanthropist should set aside all false delicacy in the earnest pursuit of truth. I believe Slavery natural, necessary, indispensable. You think it inexpedient, immoral and criminal. Neither of us should withhold any facts that will enable the public to form correct opinions.[25]

Garrison professed himself amused at the Virginian's ideas expressed in *Sociology for the South* which he described as a "defence of slavery for laboring blacks and whites universally, and denouncing freedom as of the devil." From his reading of Fitzhugh's work and the letter, he concluded, "He is evidently a moral lunatic, and may place us in *his* category just where he pleases." [26] Gar-

[23] Boston *Liberator,* September 29, 1856.
[24] *Ibid.,* February 22, 1857.
[25] *Ibid.,* July 25, 1856.
[26] *Ibid.*

rison was then at the height of his uncompromising fight against slavery. On Independence Day, 1854, he had publicly burned a copy of the Constitution as a compromise with tyranny. His *Liberator,* with a circulation never over three thousand, carried its cosmopolitan motto, "Our country is the world—Our countrymen are mankind." Like many other abolitionists he combined demands in his reforming zeal ranging from women's rights and abolitionism, to puritanical taboos on tobacco and the theater. Garrison belonged in spirit to the social milieu of Cromwell's England.

The Richmond *Examiner,* a constant supporter of Fitzhugh, published this correspondence with its endorsement:

> If Mr. Fitzhugh will pertinaciously adhere to the course intimated in his card, his triumph is certain. Compel the Abolitionist, who is the prosecutor, to show, from history and statistics, that the evils of hireling society are less than those of slave society; that slavery to capital is better than slavery to human masters; that the condition of the laboring class of Europe, and of the free Negroes of America, has been improved by emancipation.[27]

In another letter to Garrison on November 18, 1856, Fitzhugh issued a fresh challenge to the abolitionists, demanding an answer to certain questions regarding free society which contained the essence of *Cannibals All!* After repeating some of his earlier observations on the superiority of slave to free labor, he asked:

> When your society grows older, your population more dense, and property, by your trading, speculating and commercial habits, gets into a few hands, will not the slavery to capital be more complete and unmitigated than in any part of Europe, where a throne, a nobility and established church, stand between the bosses, bankers and landlords, and the oppressed masses?

[27] Richmond *Examiner,* November 7, 1856.

Impressed by the evidences of prosperity he had seen in New England, Fitzhugh said little of contemporary labor exploitation in that section, emphasizing instead the inevitable doom that awaited an overpopulated competitive society in the future.

His final question is of particular interest because of its parallelism to Lincoln's idea on the relationship of public opinion to slavery, although the positions taken were diametrically opposed. Fitzhugh asked:

> Would not the North be willing to leave the settlement of the slavery question in Kansas to the public opinion of Christendom, (for it will be settled by all Christendom, of whom not one in a hundred will be slaveholders,) if it were not sensible that public opinion was about to decide in favor of *negro* slavery, and, therefore, that it must be forestalled by Federal legislation? [28]

Fitzhugh had reference here to the efforts of the anti-slavery forces which desired the Federal government to keep slavery out of Kansas. In keeping with his house-divided doctrines he assumed that public opinion would inevitably make slavery universal, since free society was but a brief experiment and altogether anomalous in history. This was in sharp contrast to Lincoln who felt that the Founding Fathers, aided by public opinion, had placed slavery in the course of ultimate extinction and that this process towards unity had been suddenly arrested by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.[29]

Fitzhugh, in fact, was reiterating during these months the house-divided doctrine. In a letter of July 20, 1856, to Greeley announcing *Cannibals All!* the Virginian expressed this oft-repeated idea in an uncompromising form: " 'Tis not possible that our two forms of society can long

[28] Fitzhugh to William L. Garrison, November 18, 1856, in *Cannibals All!* 375–76.

[29] Nicolay and Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works,* I, 347.

co-exist. All Christendom is one republic, has one religion, belongs to one race, and is governed by one public opinion. Social systems, formed on opposite principles, cannot co-endure." [30] This time Fitzhugh stated the irrepressible conflict quite baldly, with no attempt to avoid the dangerous inference of that violence which Douglas believed he detected in Lincoln's famous speech at Springfield. But it is evident from Fitzhugh's later writings that he had no desire to see the two sections locked in a bloody contest for survival. His too-frequent reiteration of an intellectual position often led him to abbreviate his ideas in a dangerous fashion.

Cannibals All! was published by the same men who prepared *Sociology for the South,* Adolphus Morris and C. H. Wynne of Richmond. Holmes, engaged at the time in a close competition for the new Chair of Historical Science and Literature at the University of Virginia, was unable to read the manuscript before publication. He had, however, advised Fitzhugh on the validity of some of the theories proposed. Fitzhugh gave generous recognition to "Professor H." in his book, quoting his reviews and expressing indebtedness to his influence. "In making a distinct onslaught on the popular doctrines of Modern Ethics," he wrote, "I must share the credit or censure with my corresponding acquaintance and friend, Professor H. of Virginia." [31] Privately he declared to Holmes in July, 1857, "We have conjointly broached doctrines that go far to revolutionize the moral science of the day—and those doctrines meet with no denial, or attempt at refutation." [32]

The book was dedicated in an open letter of August 22, 1856, to Governor Wise, whom he regarded as a symbol of "State strength and State independence," whose assist-

[30] Fitzhugh to Horace Greeley, July 20, 1856, in *Cannibals All!* 155.
[31] *Ibid.,* ix.
[32] Fitzhugh to Holmes, July 27, 1857, in Holmes Letter Book.

ance to internal improvements benefited Virginia and added equally "to the wealth, the strength and perpetuity of the Union."

> I dedicate this work to you, because I am acquainted with no one who has so zealously, laboriously and successfully endeavored to Virginianise Virginia, by encouraging, through State legislation, her intellectual and physical growth and development; no one who has seen so clearly the evils of centralization from without, and worked so earnestly to cure or avert those evils, by building up centralization within.[33]

In his introduction Fitzhugh quoted a large extract from Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* which described the disintegrating chaos of laissez-faire ideals and commented, "Now we plant ourselves on this passage from Carlyle. We say that, as far as it goes, 'tis a faithful picture of the isms of the North." He did not explain the origin of the title *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters,* but it is apparent that both phrases are suggested by identical terms in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets.* Fitzhugh explained that the scientific title would best be expressed by the French term *exploitation,* but he had decided to render this by the title chosen. The book, while intended to carry the same message as *Sociology for the South,* was planned as a more intensive and analytical treatment of the weaknesses of modern competitive societies.

Again, as in his previous book, Fitzhugh depended heavily upon the five leading British journals, sold so cheaply by Leonard Scott and Company of New York. This time he drew even more heavily from the sensational parliamentary reports on industrial conditions in Britain, although obtaining this information entirely through secondary authorities. His office, indeed, became a library of forbidden literature. "We have whole files of infidel and abolition papers," he admitted, "like the Tribune, the

[33] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* vii.

Liberator and Investigator. Fanny Wright, the Devil's Pulpit and the Devil's Parson, Tom Paine, Owen, Voltaire, et id genus omne, are our daily companions. Good people give our office a wide berth as they pass it." [34]

The style of *Cannibals All!,* as was true of his other writings, suffered seriously from a lack of organization and tiresome repetition. Fitzhugh's reviewers had made him fully conscious of his shortcomings in this respect. In a hope, possibly, to disarm such criticism, the author apologized for his "discursive, unmethodical and unartistic manner." As a jury lawyer of some twenty-five years' practice, he explained, an inveterate habit had been acquired of "cumulation and iteration," and of using varied arguments and illustrations. At the same time he had "learned how 'to make out our case' and to know when it is 'made out.' " A lawyer who observed the unities, he felt, would be sure to lose his case; hence Fitzhugh's style, now that the world was his jury and he was endeavoring to bring in a verdict of "guilty" against free society.[35] "The best mode, we think, of writing, is that in which fact, and argument, and rhetoric, and wit, and sarcasm, succeed each other with rapid iteration."

Frankly, he admitted that he could afford to "indulge in abandon" because he had no reputation to lose as an author. Should the book "take," he promised humorously to "mount the antithetical stilts of auctorial dignity" and write a book as stale and dry as the "remainder biscuit" after a long sea voyage and one that would be as free from originality and wit as the Queen's Speech or the President's message. He did not feel authorized as yet, he explained, to bore the world with "respectable stupidity." As for his old failing of self-contradiction, he dismissed this with the comment, "We would rather be right than consistent."

[34] *Ibid.,* 284. [35] *Ibid.,* 347.

Chapter XII

"SLAVES WITHOUT MASTERS"

"MY chief aim," explained Fitzhugh to the readers of his book, "has been to shew, that *Labor makes values, and Wit exploitates and accumulates them;* and hence to deduce the conclusion that the unrestricted exploitation of so-called free society, is more oppressive to the laborer than domestic slavery." [1] His sustained attack on free competitive society had by this time brought him by a side entrance into the intellectual camp of the post-Ricardian Socialists who regarded economic "value" as "embodied labor." Rodbertus and Karl Marx were then developing their exclusive emphasis upon the workman's contribution to the economic product with obvious implications for the parasitic nature of "capital" and "wit," as Fitzhugh would have added. Southern reviewers of *Cannibals All!* were to squirm uneasily as they observed the offensive alliance of Fitzhugh and the Socialists against the injustices of capitalism despite the reassurances of the Virginian that this association was merely a marriage of convenience in the interest of the South. His first paragraph began in a challenging fashion:

> We are, all, North and South, engaged in the White Slave Trade, and he who succeeds best, is esteemed most respectable. It is far more cruel than the Black Slave Trade, because it exacts more of its slaves, and neither protects nor governs them. We boast, that it exacts more, when we say, "that the *profits* made from employing free labor are greater than those from slave labor." The profits, made from free labor, are the amount

[1] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* ix.

of the products of such labor, which the employer, by means of the command which capital or skill gives him, takes away, exacts or "exploitates" from the free laborer. The profits of slave labor are that portion of the products of such labor which the power of the master enables him to appropriate. These profits are less, because the master allows the slave to retain a larger share of the results of his own labor, than do the employers of free labor. But we not only boast that the White Slave Trade is more exacting and fraudulent (in fact, though not in intention,) than Black Slavery; but we also boast, that it is more cruel, in leaving the laborer to take care of himself and family out of the pittance which skill or capital have allowed him to retain.[2]

When Fitzhugh wrote of the "respectability" enjoyed by those who were able to make others work for them, his terms were suggestive of Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class.* Although the Virginian might lack the profound subtleties and innuendoes of Veblen, he could have easily appreciated the observation of the famous Norwegian-American economist, "Those employments which are to be classed as exploit are worthy, honourable, noble; other employments, which do not contain this element of exploit, and especially those which imply subservience or submission, are unworthy, debasing, ignoble."[3] Such a society, according to both men, produced its own pecuniary canons of virtue and taste. To Fitzhugh competitive practices and ideals seemed "little better than moral Cannibalism."

From his friendly enemy, Andrews, Fitzhugh had admittedly borrowed a new theory of interest which he hastened to make the center of a fresh onslaught on industrial capitalism. He had expounded this idea in the February, 1855, issues of the *Enquirer,* and summarized it in a letter to Holmes:

[2] *Ibid.,* 25–26.
[3] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1905), 15.

All interest is wrong, because the principal represents the labour of the man who accumulates it and should be exchanged for other people's labour. Hence Rents and Interest are the means by which Capital masters Labour. Capital or property is not exchanged for Labour, but by interests and rents masters Labour. 'Tis a truth that will blow up free Society. It does not hurt Slave Society because generally the increase of the domestic Master's capital benefits the slave. He as a member of the family naturally and usually gets his just share of the increase of Capital. I never read Proudhon. If this is what he means when he exclaims, "Property is a Thief," he is right. Property in Free Society is at least a Master. It commands Labour —does not pay for it.[4]

In a subsequent letter to Holmes he explained his theory in more concrete and militant terms:

A by his labour makes ten-thousand dollars—stops work—keeps his principal—lives on $400 of interest, and lays up $200 a year. This is the Hocus Pocus by which all property enslaves labour, and in Free Society pays no labour for labour, but by increasing its capital, besides supporting the owners, gets stronger mastery over labour every day, and makes the labourers forge their own chain.[5]

This illustration Fitzhugh labeled as "Proof: That Property is a Master."

His economics bore the unmistakable stamp of Josiah Warren's "Trialville" and the various Fourierite phalansteries which dotted the Northern states, although he avoided their obvious conclusions. The Trialville experiment had been based on the idea that equal amounts of labor or their equivalents should be exchanged for each other. Warren, according to Fitzhugh, had assumed that since lawyers and artists did not work so hard and continuously as the plowman, they ought to receive less wages than he. "Such a system of trade and exchange," observed Fitz-

[4] Fitzhugh to Holmes, February 5, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book.
[5] *Id.* to *id.*, n.d., *ibid.*

hugh, "would equalize conditions, but would banish civilization." While the Socialists, including those of Trialville, demonstrated to his satisfaction that capital oppressed the laboring masses, he rejected their social prescriptions which would "cure the disease by killing the patient." Fitzhugh chose to solve the logical dilemma by concluding that exploitation in some form was not too dear a price for civilization.[6]

With his predilection for things medieval he came to adopt an almost canonical interpretation of interest-taking, albeit with a socialist flavor. He accepted the dictum of the Utopian Socialists that "The use of a thing, is only a fair subject of exchange, in so far as the article used is consumed in the use; for such consumption is the consumption of the labor or capital of the owner, and is but the exchange of equivalent amounts of labor." To this denial of the ethics of interest he added the authority of Aristotle and Moses. The former had contended that since money would not breed, interest should not be allowed. Moses had gone even further and prohibited usury in regard to other objects as well as money, thus preventing competition among Jews and encouraging "permanent equality of condition and fraternal feelings." [7]

So literally did he accept the conception of value as "embodied labor" advocated by Andrews, Warren, and the Socialists, that he reprimanded one of his old friends, a wealthy retired lawyer of Virginia, for using his capital as an instrument to compel others to work for him; this situation seemed bad enough during the productive days of the lawyer. Fitzhugh's explanation of his criticism is interesting:

We expounded our theory to him. Told him we used to consider him a good man, and quite an example for the rising

[6] Josiah Warren, *Equitable Commerce* (Utopia, Ohio, 1849), *passim;* Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 37.

[7] *Cannibals All!* 36.

generation; but that now he stood condemned under our theory. Whilst making his fortune, he daily exchanged about one day of his light labor for thirty days of the farmer, the gardener, the miner, the ditcher, the sewing woman, and other common working people's labor. His capital was but the accumulation of the results of their labor; for common labor creates all capital. Their labor was more necessary and useful than his, and also harder and more disagreeable. . . . They were "slaves without masters"; the little fish, who were food for all the larger. . . .

We told him he had made his fortune by the exploitation of skill, and was now living by the still worse exploitation of capital.

His friend, as was natural under the circumstances, appeared annoyed by this concrete but unflattering application of Fitzhugh's theories. Evidently resourceful, he returned some days later "with a face beaming with smiles" and offered to answer the objections of the persistent amateur economist of Port Royal. Oppression and exaction by skill and capital, such as Fitzhugh had mentioned, were necessary in order to diffuse the population over the earth, explained the elderly lawyer. Since half the world was unsettled, most men were free to "become proprietors by change of residence." An exploitation that dispersed men from crowded countries was an obvious blessing. "It will be time enough," he declared, "to discuss your theory of the despotism of skill and capital, when all the world is densely settled, and the men without property can no longer escape from the exactions of those who hold property."

Fitzhugh was charmed by this "ingenious and novel" theory which he thereafter adopted as his own. It was particularly adapted to the circumstances of the North where the effects of fierce oppression by labor and capital were offset by the fact that "in forty-eight hours, laborers may escape to the West, and become proprietors." "The emigra-

tion to the West," wrote Fitzhugh, "rids the East of a surplus population, and enriches it by the interchanges of trade and commerce which the emigration immediately begets." This was, however, an exceptional situation; once the Northwest was peopled it would be time for Greeley's phalansteries and Gerrit Smith's agrarian communism.[8]

Among the corollaries of his doctrine of capitalist exploitation was the belief that the true incidence of taxation fell exclusively upon the laborer, who created all values. The wealthy, in the language he had heard from Smith, were but the conduits by which taxes passed over to the government. A second corollary of the "embodied labor" concept was that the accumulation of capital increased the labor of the poor and actually lessened their remuneration. In a startlingly Marxian phrase he observed, "Thus the poor are continually forging new chains for themselves."

Fitzhugh assumed that the superior techniques of human exploitation found in nonslaveholding communities accounted for the much larger number of millionaires in the North than in the South.[9] To a later generation it is apparent that if ante-bellum Southern agriculture did not produce millionaires on the scale created by Northern commerce and industry, this disproportion can scarcely be attributed to slavery alone, as the decades following emancipation attest. In common with the antislavery writers Fitzhugh exaggerated the economic determinism of the slave system. Aside from the humane aspects of Negro freedom, emancipation did not actually revolutionize Southern economy; nor did it mean the removal of the economic differentiation between Northern and Southern states. Racial prejudices remained to assert every "jot and tittle" of a white man's South; and the economic relationships imposed upon an allegedly inferior species continued to flow from the exigencies of a dual society.

From those Northern reformers who were abolitionists

[8] *Ibid.*, 58–59.

[9] *Ibid.*, 50.

with socialist tendencies, he sought to find additional testimony of the exploitative character of free society. William Goodell, author of *Democracy of Christianity,* and, according to Fitzhugh, one of the most active leaders of the Gerrit Smith wing of abolitionism, furnished him with a congenial extract, for Goodell had written:

> And what is this pride of wealth, after all, growing up into the aristocracy of wealth, the usurpations of wealth, the oppressions of wealth, grinding the masses of humanity into the dust to-day, throughout our modern Christendom, in the middle of our nineteenth century civilization and progress, with a hoof more flintly, more swinish, and MORE MURDEROUS (capitals ours) than that of semi-barbarous feudalism in its bloodiest days.[10]

Another involuntary witness was Garrison, who was honored with the credit of being head of "the extreme wing of the Socialist, Infidel, Woman's-Right, Agrarian and Abolition party." Fitzhugh pointed out that, logically enough, Garrison, finding that the Bible and the Constitution recognized slavery, denounced both. Taking an editorial on the higher law from the *Liberator,* Fitzhugh attributed these anarchistic words to Garrison:

> What is called human government is usurpation, imposture, demagoguism, peculation, swindling, and tyranny, more or less, according to circumstances, and to the intellectual and moral condition of the people. Unquestionably, every existing government on earth is to be overthrown by the growth of mind and moral regeneration of the masses. Absolutism, limited monarchy, democracy—all are sustained by the sword; all are based upon the doctrine, that "might makes right"; all are intrinsically inhuman, selfish, clannish, and opposed to a recognition of the brotherhood of man.[11]

Although this testimony had the diffuseness of a shotgun's discharge, Fitzhugh was content to accept it as proof of

[10] *Ibid.,* 129. [11] *Ibid.,* 309.

the abolitionist's real opinion of the exploitative character of free as well as slave society.

Interspersed with these comments on the exploitative character of nonslaveholding communities were Fitzhugh's idyllic portraits of slave life and the theoretical immunity of the plantation system from the economic evils of competitive states. First of all, labor was a form of capital in slave societies. Should taxes be imposed on the slaveholder, they were paid by retrenching his expenses other than slave labor, since to reduce the payment equivalents to the slaves meant endangering their efficiency and health. Unlike free society, where labor bore all charges, slaves enjoyed full immunity. Harmonious relations between masters and slaves were an outgrowth of self-interest. The class war was virtually suicide with slaves worth nearly one thousand dollars a head. "The negro slaves of the South," boasted Fitzhugh, "are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world." [12]

Additional evidence for the unique virtues of slavery came from an unexpected quarter. A visiting minister of Massachusetts, the Reverend Nehemiah Adams, had written a book, *A South-Side View of Slavery*, which stirred bitter feelings against him in the North. Adams believed that slavery in the plantation states exercised an invaluable role in the solution of the race problem. "That fearful element in society," he wrote, "an irresponsible and low class, is diminished at the South. Street brawls and conflicts between two races of laboring people, or the ignorant and more excitable portions of different religious denominations, are mostly unknown within the bounds of slavery." [13] Had he permitted himself the opportunity of examining closely Southern newspapers of the 1850's, he would have discovered that the rural South, at least, was no whit behind Northern communities in the exercise of mob passions.

[12] *Ibid.*, 29.

[13] *Ibid.*, 103.

America might appear to be a house divided as between freedom and slavery, but the Virginian was confident that the age-old "slavery principle" must ultimately prevail. Only by a system of greater social control could the community effectively exercise its duty to protect the weak. Like the Socialists who believed in the inevitability of the socialist state through the dialectic of history and the "inner contradictions" of capitalism, so Fitzhugh explained the coming victory of slavery in terms of inner compulsions of free society:

> As modern civilization advances, slavery becomes daily more necessary, because its tendency is to accumulate all capital in a few hands, cuts off the masses from the soil, lessens their wages and their chances of employment, and increases the necessity for a means of certain subsistence, which slavery alone can furnish, when a few own all the lands and other capital.[14]

Although Karl Marx's first volume of *Capital* was not published until 1867, certain of his earlier writings were already available in English. Fitzhugh was evidently acquainted with the famous Communist Manifesto of 1848, either directly or indirectly, since he quoted its phraseology in *Cannibals All!* Both Marx and Fitzhugh drew from the common stream of socialist thought, to which, strangely enough, the early classical economists, such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, contributed no small share, as is evident in the theory of labor as the only cost of production. Marx was indebted in large measure to the despised Utopians for his theories of surplus value and the exploitative nature of interest; Fitzhugh likewise drew from this same source, although through the American school of Socialists. The basic formulation of these ideas appears in the work of the early nineteenth century reformers of Britain, William Thompson and John Gray; and in the American work of J. F. Bray, to mention but a few.[15]

[14] *Ibid.*, 46.

[15] Edmund Whittaker, *A History of Economic Ideas* (New York, 1940), Chap. V.

Marx, too, like Fitzhugh and the earlier Socialists, spoke of "labour-time" as a unit of economic value. Certainly he subscribed to the Virginian's conception of "slaves without masters." "In fact," charged Marx in *Capital,* "the veiled slavery of the wage-earners in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world." [16] His dictum on free and slave labor in the surplus value theory is of particular interest: "The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labour, and one based on wage labour, lies only in the mode in which this surplus-labour is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the labourer." [17]

Marx, in keeping with the socialist tradition, which Fitzhugh utilized, did not stress the superiority of free over slave society. He contended that the property relation of the slave to the master concealed the fact that the Negro in bondage labored for himself on a scale comparable to the wage laborer. In his *Capital* he protested:

> The "Morning Star," a London free-trade organ, naïf to silliness, protested again and again during the American civil war, with all the moral indignation of which man is capable, that the negro in the "Confederate States" worked absolutely for nothing. It should have compared the daily cost of such a negro with that of the free workman in the East end of London.[18]

Fitzhugh saved his heaviest ammunition for the social and economic evils of England, rather than the Northern states, devoting the larger part of his book to the weaknesses of the competitive system in that country. As his writings show, however, he had read the newspapers regarding the bread lines in Northern cities, the recurrent labor outbreaks, and the chronic problems of unemployment, slums, divorce, and crime. On occasion he was ready to twit his Northern brethren on their shortcomings, but

[16] Karl Marx, *Capital,* 3 vols. (Chicago, 1909), I, 833.
[17] *Ibid.,* 241.
[18] *Ibid.,* 591n.

he was unwilling to go so far as to antagonize the conservative element in the free states by a detailed treatment of social conditions at the North. Instead, he contented himself by observing the exceptional character of Northern society due to the beneficent influence of unoccupied Western lands.

Contemporary scholars like Professor Fred A. Shannon have tended to discount the frontier "safety valve" theory regarding labor.[19] Certainly the period of 1850–1860, which Fitzhugh observed, brought many tribulations to the Northern laborer whose opposition to the employer bore an ominous suggestion of class war. The early struggle for the ten-hour day invoked in Massachusetts the alliance of corporate business and Whig politics against the attempts of workmen to utilize their strength at the ballot box. The former paternalism of Waltham and Lowell, whose system of employee surveillance bore certain resemblances to Fitzhugh's "slavery principle," was passing in favor of a greater impersonality in labor relations, marked by the rising corporation and the newly legalized trade union. The older humanitarianism, with its refusal to accept the determinism of supply and demand, its co-operative spirit, was imperceptibly yielding, in Carlyle's phrase, to a "cash nexus" between man and man. Some militants among the New England mill operatives during the fifties insisted that their status was one of white slavery, fully as degrading as the black slavery of the South.[20] Greeley found in 1851 that his modest weekly budget for a family of five, amounting to $10.37, was beyond the means of a majority of American workmen, necessitating the labor of every member of the family, almost regardless of age, for group survival.[21]

[19] Fred A. Shannon, "The Homestead Act and the Labor Surplus," in *American Historical Review*, XLI (1936), 639.

[20] Henry A. Miles, *Lowell As It Was, and As It Is* (Lowell, Mass., 1845); Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840–1860* (Boston, 1924).

[21] From the New York *Tribune*, quoted in Edward C. Kirkland, *A History of American Economic Life* (New York, 1939), 348; Wilfred Carsel, "The

Not only did Fitzhugh adopt the Socialists' interpretation of competitive society, but he also accepted their economic interpretation of Britain's constitutional history. As a target for his verbal shafts Fitzhugh chose the famous *Commentaries on the Laws of England* by William Blackstone, noted British jurist and legal historian of the eighteenth century, whose work was the standard authority of Fitzhugh's generation. Blackstone's adulation of British liberties and free institutions revealed a Tory optimism and complacency which antagonized a rising generation of reformers both within and outside the legal profession. Fitzhugh challenged Blackstone's historical interpretation:

> He holds that the appearance of the House of Commons about the reign of Henry the Third, was the dawn of approaching liberty. We contend that it was the origin of the capitalist and moneyed interest government, destined finally to swallow up all other powers in the State, and to bring about the most selfish, exacting and unfeeling class, despotism. He thinks the emancipation of the serfs was another advance towards equality of rights and conditions. We think it aggravated inequality of conditions, and divested the liberated class of every valuable, social and political right.[22]

Blackstone held that the effect of the Reformation had been to increase English liberties. "We think," wrote his critic, "that, in destroying the noblest charity fund in the world, the church lands, and abolishing a priesthood, the efficient and zealous friends of the poor, the Reformation tended to diminish the liberty of the mass of the people, and to impair their moral, social and physical well-being." The Virginian denied Blackstone's interpretation that the Puritan Revolution by increasing the power of the House of Commons and lessening the prerogative of Church and

Slaveholder's Indictment of Northern Wage Slavery," in *Journal of Southern History,* VI (1940), 504–20. This essay tends to overemphasize Fitzhugh's condemnation of Northern working conditions; in reality, the Virginian had largely in mind the European scene as indicated above.

[22] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 157; cf. Marx, *Capital,* I, 792–93.

Monarch actually promoted liberty. "We think," he wrote, departing somewhat from his Socialist mentors, "the Crown and the Church the natural friends, allies and guardians of the laboring class; the House of Commons, a moneyed firm, their natural enemies; and that the Revolution was a marked epoch in the steady decay of British liberty." As for Blackstone's praise of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the successful assertion of parliamentary supremacy, he replied vigorously:

> We are sure, that that settlement, and the chartering of the Bank of England, which soon succeeded it, united the landed and moneyed interests, placed all the powers of government in their hands, and deprived the great laboring class of every valuable right and liberty. The nobility, the church, the king, were now powerless; and the mass of the people, wholly unrepresented in the government, found themselves exposed to the grinding and pitiless despotism of their natural and hereditary enemies.

Thus did the defender of slavery accept the class-struggle doctrine in its most uncompromising form, except for the exemption he granted to precapitalist society. He seemed unaware of the true capitalistic economics of the plantation, and of the rising capitalistic spirit of such Southern cities as New Orleans, Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah. Only in London and Paris, in Manchester and Marseilles, and in their equivalents of the Northern cities could he recognize the specter of class antagonism.

Beggary, he insisted, began with the abolition of serfdom and the ensuing class struggle of free society. Under feudalism "every man in England had his appropriate situation and duties, and a mutual and adequate interest in the soil." In effect the lands of England were the common property of its people and the interests of all classes were reciprocal. After serfdom came the "sturdy beggars" to add a turbulent element to society. So began the history of the poor laws,

an inglorious chapter in human relations which represented a sheer caricature of the spirit of philanthropy. Their true significance, according to Fitzhugh, lay in their application by the middle class and the landowner to recover the controls over labor once exercised in the feudal era.

In the contemporary social and economic abuses of England, Fitzhugh saw the culmination of the process of human degradation begun with the abolition of serfdom. He quoted the sentiments expressed by a New York abolitionist, Charles E. Lester, who had written in 1841 *The Glory and Shame of England,* a two-volume work based on his English visit. Lester had said that he would prefer to subject his child to Southern slavery than have him work as a free laborer in England.[23] From William H. Howitt's *Rural Life of England* Fitzhugh attempted to prove that the rural folk, far from being better off than the urban population, lived in many instances a subhuman existence, with many examples of "wild children" who spoke in a scarcely intelligible manner. A contributor in the November, 1855, issue of the *North British Review,* writing of the physiological characteristics of a certain rural district, observed "their lank, colorless hair, screening the sunken eye, and trailing upon the bony neck; . . . the hollow cheeks, the candle-like arms, and the unmuscular shanks." [24]

Other books and journals quoted by Fitzhugh pointed out how unfortunate had been the experiment of freeing the slaves of the British Empire, particularly as far as production and civilization were concerned. It was useless for Britain to extend her sovereignty over tropical territory, remarked the London *Globe* of July 10, 1856, since slavery, the only feasible labor system, was condemned. There were not a few British magazines and newspapers during the forties and fifties ready to lament the passing of Negro

[23] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 158.

[24] *Ibid.,* 247. The accuracy of this picture is supported by Cole and Postgate, *The British Common People,* Chap. XXIII.

slavery. "What vile hypocrisy," exclaimed Fitzhugh regarding the English philanthropists, "to shed crocodile tears over the happy negro, and boast of British Liberty, which is daily and hourly consuming, by poverty, and cold, and foul air and water, and downright starvation, the lives of ten millions of your white brethren and neighbors." In the unrestrained rhetoric of the confirmed Socialist, he concluded that this system which carried three hundred thousand Irishmen to their graves in a single season would not be condemned because it was "profitable to the oppressors." [25]

Against these mockeries of liberty Fitzhugh proclaimed his standard for future victories, "The world is too little governed," a phrase borrowed from Carlyle. In the verse of Alexander Pope, whom he admired, he found the philosophical justification of human inequality:

> Whether with reason or with instinct blest,
> All enjoy that power that suits them best;
> Order is Heaven's first law, and this confessed,
> Some are, and must be greater than the rest—
> More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence
> That such are happier, shocks all common sense.

Since man was by nature social rather than an isolated being, he was subject from birth to restrictions on his liberty which were expedient within the social state. Such restrictions, believed the Virginian, could not therefore proceed from any pre-existing social contract, but were inherent in the nature of social necessities.

"Liberty of the press, liberty of speech, freedom of religion, or rather freedom from religion, and the unlimited right of private judgment have borne no good fruits, and many bad ones," Fitzhugh wrote, defying the shibboleths of democracy. Asserting that society had the right and duty of protecting itself, it was justified in intervening by law,

[25] Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!* 276.

after public opinion had become powerless, to punish all acts, words, or opinions which have become dangerous or injurious to the common welfare. He had in mind the proponents of the isms at the North, including agrarians, skeptics and atheists, Millerites, Bloomers, and the supporters of free Negroes.

Fond of expressing himself in the most positive terms despite mental reservations, he said, "We would rejoice to see intolerance of error revived in New England. Laxity of rule and laxity of public opinion is sin of itself, and leads to thousands of sins." It was criminal, he felt, to tolerate the pulpit excesses of the outspoken antislavery leaders, Theodore Parker and Henry Ward Beecher; these men were responsible for at least one thousand murders in Kansas. They had committed these injustices in the name of the right of private judgment, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. "These boasted privileges have become far more dangerous to the lives, the property and the peace of the people of this Union, than all the robbers and murderers and malefactors put together," he observed.

Was this right of private judgment an immediate result of the Reformation? He thought not. The acts and thoughts of Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and Erasmus did not of themselves precipitate the great Protestant Revolt, but the acts and thought of society itself, endeavoring to throw off its excrescences, did. The social body as "a thinking, acting, sentient being" produced this great movement and "speculative philosophers and vain schismatics" attempted to engraft upon society such harmful doctrines as that of the supremacy of private judgment. He concluded with characteristic hyperbole, "Sure we are, that a fire that would consume all the theological and other philosophical speculations of the last two centuries, would be a happy Godsend." [26]

Jefferson was denounced by Fitzhugh as "the genius of

[26] *Ibid.*, 196.

innovation, the architect of ruin, the inaugurator of anarchy." The "fundamental principles" of the Sage of Monticello were but an anticipation of Seward's higher law, justifying perennial social disorder:

> Fundamental principles, or the higher law, are secrets of nature which God keeps to himself. The vain attempt of "frequent recurrence to them," is but the act of the child who builds card houses, for the pleasure of knocking them down. Recurrence to fundamental principles and appeals to the higher law, are but the tocsin of revolution that may upset everything, but which will establish nothing, because no two men are agreed as to what the higher law, alias "fundamental principles" is.

All government, he said, proceeded from external compulsion and neither individuals nor societies could be said to govern themselves. "The South," he admitted, "is governed by the necessity of keeping its negroes in order, which preserves a healthy conservative public opinion. . . . The little republics of ancient Greece were able to preserve the most artificial social arrangements, under the necessities which slavery and foreign hostile pressure from without begat. They were afraid of change, because insurrection was dangerous." [27] Physical force, he repeated, not moral suasion, ruled the world.

> The negro sees the driver's lash, becomes accustomed to obedient, cheerful industry, and is not aware that the lash is the force that impels him. The free citizen fulfills, "con amore," his round of social, political and domestic duties, and never dreams that the Law, with its fines and jails, penitentiaries and halters, or Public Opinion, with its ostracism, its mobs, and its tars and feathers, help to keep him revolving in his orbit. Yet, remove these physical forces, and how many good citizens would shoot, like fiery comets, from their spheres, and disturb society with their eccentricities and their crimes.

Just as in ancient republics where a small class of adult male citizens assumed and exercised government without

[27] *Ibid.*, 200.

the consent of the governed, so the South had adopted this procedure. "In the county in which we live," he remarked, "there are eighteen thousand souls, and only twelve hundred voters. But we twelve hundred, the governors, never asked and never intend to ask the consent of the sixteen thousand eight hundred whom we govern. Were we to do so, we should soon have an 'organized anarchy.'" Thus Caroline County became the well-governed state in miniature, as Fitzhugh viewed it.

The conservative minority interests of every ruling class, he believed, made for stability. In older, heavily populated states the immediate interest of the majority, due to limited economic opportunity, would inevitably be opposed to all established order and the rights of property. If left alone the masses would be certain to revolutionize government as frequently as the condition of the majority turned out to be worse than that of the minority. It was desirable, then, to stabilize the power of the conservative governing class. "We think that by a kind of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the South, Northern Conservatism may now arrest and turn back the tide of Radicalism and Agrarianism," he wrote. This would constitute a sound bulwark for the ruling classes of both sections against social upheavals.

Apparently accepting the "virtual representation" theory of Edmund Burke subsequently revived by the modern dictators, Fitzhugh believed that a ruling class should, according to its best lights, represent the masses. The ballot box might reign but need not govern; rather, public opinion, discernible by an alert ruling group, should be a dominant controlling element. "The mass of mankind," he asserted, "cannot be governed by Law. More of despotic discretion, and less of Law, is what the world wants." [28] Although the personal kindliness of Fitzhugh would have compelled him to shrink from the practices of modern totalitarianism, his fundamental premises and precepts

[28] *Ibid.*, 361.

were obviously congenial to the antidemocratic creeds of the twentieth century.

Yet Fitzhugh avoided a direct attack upon democracy by name, preferring to redefine its content to his own satisfaction. In this respect, too, he furnished a model for later totalitarian rulers who were to attack democratic ideals while insisting at the same time that their own states were infinitely more democratic than their doctrinal enemies. "Democracy and liberty are antagonistic," explained Fitzhugh. Liberty encouraged one class to oppress another, while Democracy sought, so far as possible, "to equalize advantages, by fairly dividing the burdens of life, and rigidly enforcing the performance of every social duty by every member of society, according to his capacity and ability." Elsewhere he remarked, "Liberty is unattainable; and if attainable, not desirable." [29]

Cannibals All! took "higher ground" than its predecessor, *Sociology for the South,* however much duplication was evident between the two. Not content with his usual contrast of the superior benefits of slavery over free labor, Fitzhugh adopted an extreme anticapitalistic position which went beyond John Taylor and the early agrarian critics in their arraignment of the alleged sinister moneyed interest in government. To defend a conservative traditional order, he accepted even the weapons of radicalism, going so far as to rely upon an economic interpretation of history and a pre-Marxian concept of the class struggle. The context of his middle-class radicalism is best suggested in the anticapitalistic vocabulary used by modern Fascist states despite their own retention of capitalistic modes of production. Fitzhugh's emphasis on the ethical weaknesses of the capitalistic spirit did not deny the need for a large competitive element within an ideal society, and here his distinction has much in common with the "good" and "bad" capitalism, recognized in the economic theory of

[29] *Ibid.,* 123.

National Socialism. Although the ante-bellum South never completely accepted Fitzhugh's entire framework of pre-Fascist ideas, these doctrines are indicative of the fact that the necessities of social domination may produce startlingly similar reactions at various times despite sharp differences in the environmental setting.

Chapter XIII

FITZHUGH ALARMS THE NORTH

"I REALLY know no one," pleaded Fitzhugh in a letter to Holmes, "who is capable of reviewing the Cannibals but you, and have waited impatiently to see a review from you." [1] The defection of Holmes at this time was a serious blow, for his powerful advocacy of *Sociology for the South* in 1855–1856 had lent prestige to the author in no small measure. Holmes was then engaged in a campaign for the new Chair of Historical Science and Literature at the University of Virginia and he was busily enlisting the aid of his journalist friends to support his candidacy in the press and in securing pledges of assistance from the legislature. There was even a rumor on the University campus that none other than François Guizot, prominent French statesman, historian, and philosopher had been offered the Chair.[2] Only a review several months later in the *University Literary Magazine,* which was intimately associated with the professorship that Holmes came to occupy, indicated that the noted reviewer had not wholly neglected his friend of Port Royal.

The reviewer welcomed *Cannibals All!* "with unfeigned pleasure," coming as it did from an eminent Virginian who had already demonstrated his clear conception of the subject, and observed:

[1] Fitzhugh to Holmes, July 27, 1857, in Holmes Letter Book.

[2] "Collegiana," *University Literary Magazine* (Richmond), I (1857), 91; Mapie to Holmes, February 14, 1857, in Holmes MSS.; Robert W. Hughes to *id.,* March 15, 1857, *ibid.*

He has enrolled himself as a champion in a cause which has, before his day, never needed potent and competent defenders, and it is only by bringing to bear weapons of argument entirely new, and covering himself with a defensive mail as well, of his own devising, that he has any right to the sympathies of the reading public for his valorous achievements in the great battle of words.[8]

Previously, the writer pointed out, Southern authors of proslavery works had confined themselves to a purely defensive position, in keeping with an older belief that free society was inevitable in the future of the South. All had recognized "the hypothesis of free society" until Fitzhugh destroyed this plausible fallacy. His theories represented the culmination of previous studies on slavery which had emphasized Biblical and anthropological sanctions for Negro bondage.

John R. Thompson's *Southern Literary Messenger,* which had formerly published Holmes's flattering review of *Sociology for the South,* announced another full-length discussion of Fitzhugh's new book, but this never materialized. Possibly Holmes's preoccupation elsewhere had something to do with this result. At any rate, Thompson's own brief editorial notice must have appeared gratifying to Fitzhugh:

Another striking work from the author of "Sociology for the South," in which the tendencies of free society towards the enslavement of Labor by Capital are strongly developed. Mr. Fitzhugh is a man who speaks his sentiments freely and deals in few circumlocutions, and however we may differ with him upon certain points of his argument, we must admit that the South owes him a large debt for the new views in which he has placed the question of domestic servitude before the world. He is the boldest and the ablest writer who has assumed the offensive in the Slavery discussion; and we may not wonder that

[8] George F. Holmes, "Cannibals All; or Slaves Without Masters," in *University Literary Magazine,* I (1857), 193–94.

the anti-slavery organs have turned upon him with all their force and attempted to elude, by the use of ridicule, the reasoning they are not able to answer.[4]

Fitzhugh's work received further praise in the *Messenger* from a contributor, "W. R. A.," writing upon "The Duty of Southern Authors." This paper was the familiar plea for a unique Southern point of view to permeate every phase of literature and serve as a pillar of conservatism.

> But while we are lamenting the absence of such a literature at the South as would defend us for the present and speak for us before posterity, let us not forget to award all honor and praise to those pioneers, whose writings upon slavery have prepared the field for the firm and steady tread of the Southern literary corps. Over the early grave of the lamented Dew, let the Southern slave-holder drop a sorrowing tear, to testify his grief to the untimely end of the able defender of our institutions. Let him cherish with pride the names of Bledsoe and Fitzhugh, whose batteries of logic the advocates of abolition dare not face. To Professor Wm. A. Smith of Randolph Macon, the thanks of the South are due for his able and eloquent maintenance of the great truth, that "slavery is the normal condition of society."

The writer might have noted that neither Bledsoe nor Smith had added much to the proslavery argument not already anticipated in *Sociology for the South.* Of Fitzhugh he remarked, "He most ably demonstrates the 'failure of Free Society'; and by contrasting it with slave society, shows by a kind of *reductio ad absurdum,* the superiority of the latter." The article concluded with an exhortation for more aggressive measures from Southern authors. "Let them speak of the impending conflict between the labor and capital of Free Society at the North, and paint 'the fierce confederate storm of sorrow, barricaded evermore in her great cities.' " [5]

[4] "Notices of New Books," in *Southern Literary Messenger,* XXIV (1857), 239.

[5] "W.R.A.," "The Duty of Southern Authors," *ibid.,* XXIII (1856), 244.

In 1858 another contributor to the *Messenger,* writing on "The Problem of Free Society," revealed a thorough acceptance of Fitzhugh's higher ground, despite certain criticisms of the Port Royal author. His comments dealt largely with *Sociology for the South* rather than the later book. He criticized Fitzhugh's assault on free trade and inferred correctly that the latter was opposed on principle to all international commerce. To Fitzhugh's contention that it was probable, if scientifically investigated, that the products of one climate when used in another were harmful, he asked, "How is it about sugar, cotton and coffee, not to mention tea and tobacco?" These criticisms, however, concealed the fact that the writer was heavily indebted to Fitzhugh's ideas; in fact, he hastened to add, "While we take the liberty of pointing out a few errors into which we think Mr. Fitzhugh has fallen, we . . . [are] happy to add the feeble tribute of our praise to his ability and zeal in the cause of the South." [6]

De Bow, an ardent supporter of his most prolific literary contributor, wrote a laudatory review of *Cannibals All!* which apparently aided its sales particularly in New Orleans. "Mr. George Fitzhugh," he proclaimed, "is one of the boldest and most daring thinkers of the age. He grapples with things as they are in reality, and is little concerned about the names and traditions, associations and consecrations in which they conceal themselves." The author's views of human nature, he thought, were not flattering, but were substantiated by history and experience. "Let the people, the conservative masses of the North," advised De Bow, "heed this, and be sure that they are not sowing the storm to reap the whirlwind." *Cannibals All!* he found startling in its originality and arresting in its profundity despite some occasional errors such as that of attacking political economy. Altogether, he concluded, the author

[6] "R.E.C.," "The Problem of Free Society," *ibid.,* XXVI (1857), 401–18; XXVII (1858), 81–94, 13n.

had earned the hearty plaudits of his countrymen for his labor in the "sacred cause." [7]

Subsequently, in 1859, De Bow called attention to a statement by a personal friend that *Cannibals All!* was "a mine of thought and a magazine of facts." Fitzhugh, he wrote, was "one of the truest philosophers of the age, but like all other philosophers, a little fond of paradoxes, a little inclined to run a theory into extremes, and a little impractical." Still, he possessed learning and genius; his excesses of conservatism were preferable to the excesses of agrarian democracy and to the preachments of "liberty, equality, and fraternity." [8]

Archibald Roane of Washington, journalist and government clerk, a member of the famous Virginia family of jurists, and a personal acquaintance of Fitzhugh, found the latter's work most "valuable, original, and profound," particularly for its suggestive contributions to the novel science of sociology. His discussion in *De Bow's Review* did not overlook Fitzhugh's intellectual and stylistic weaknesses:

> "Cannibals All" . . . to the thinking mind is a most interesting book, but it contains too much matter for the weak digestion of ordinary readers. We fear that it is, and will remain *caviare* to the million. . . . Neglect is always the penalty of being in advance of one's age. . . . The excellence of Mr. F's two works is, by no means uniform; we are sometimes startled by a profound remark in the midst of a great deal of twaddle. . . . Carelessness, want of method, and of unity of plan are patent faults lying upon the very surface of his books, which must strike the most inattentive reader.

The author, he felt, had recklessly squandered his resources, wasting enough ideas "to enrich a dozen well-known authors of the day we might mention." He feared that the thoughts of Fitzhugh's mind constituted a popula-

[7] James D. B. De Bow, "Review of Cannibals All," in *De Bow's Review*, XXII (1857), 543–48.

[8] *Id.*, "Editorial Miscellany," *ibid.*, XXVI (1859), 481.

tion "turbulent, and refractory, and not sufficiently subjected to the strict discipline of *slavery* to reason and prudence." Nevertheless, Roane recommended that the two books be consolidated as a formal treatise in social science.[9]

From elsewhere in the South and its borders came flattering endorsements. Hughes's Richmond *Examiner* declared that *Cannibals All!* was "one of the most remarkable and forcibly written works of the age." [10] Again the *National Intelligencer* gave the imprimatur of Washington officialdom to Fitzhugh's work, declaring that the new book contained arguments and facts "which will rebuke fanaticism and enchain the attention of thinking men." [11] As always the Fredericksburg *News* found Fitzhugh's proslavery writings deserving of the patronage "of every southern gentleman who wishes to see the necessity for and the advantages of slavery." [12]

By the late fifties Northern readers and foreign travelers in the South had become increasingly aware of the militant propaganda from the genial resident of Port Royal. Perhaps none showed more resentment than Garrison. On October 21, 1855, he had commemorated the twentieth anniversary of that memorable Sunday afternoon when five thousand "gentlemen of property and standing" had broken up a meeting of the Female Anti-Slavery Society to drag Garrison, with a rope thrown about him, through the streets of Boston.[13] Since then his cause had become increasingly respectable and ruffianism in broadcloth no longer threatened him with physical violence; but his own intransigence had increased correspondingly, although in the form of passive resistance.

[9] Archibald Roane, "Ross on Slavery and Stiles' Modern Reform," *ibid.*, XXIV (1858), 304–12.

[10] Quoted in the Fredericksburg *News,* January 29, 1857.

[11] *Ibid.,* April 6, 1857.

[12] *Ibid.* The unmistakable influence of *Cannibals All!* is discernible in David R. Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States* (New York, 1860).

[13] Boston *Liberator,* November 2, 1855.

Fitzhugh's writings were well known to the pages of the *Liberator.* On perhaps a half dozen occasions quotations from his *Sociology for the South* or his editorials in the Richmond *Enquirer* had been given a full column in Garrison's journalistic equivalent of the Puritanical stocks, the "Refuge of Oppression," in which proslavery sentiments, North and South, were displayed for public opprobrium. Extracts from Fitzhugh's first book had been introduced as "a shallow, impudent, and thoroughly satanic work." [14] Usually it was Fitzhugh's *Enquirer* editorials rather than those of his Richmond colleagues that furnished most grist to Garrison's mill, particularly the emphasis on slavery as a "natural and normal institution" and the failure of liberty.[15]

When Garrison received his copy of *Cannibals All!* from Ticknor, Fields, and Company, booksellers of Boston, he was moved to fresh extremes of vituperation, giving it considerably more attention than perhaps any other book in the history of the *Liberator,* a degree of publicity approached only by his chronic attacks on Adams' *A South-Side View of Slavery.* Once more long extracts from the work of Fitzhugh graced the "Refuge of Oppression" box. Garrison issued a review which occupied one and a half columns.

Mr. Fitzhugh is the Don Quixote of Slavedom—only still more demented than his "illustrious predecessor." As the latter saw in a harmless windmill a giant of frightful aspect, and lustily assailed it with all the success possible under the circumstances, so the former sees in freedom a terrific monster which is devouring its millions, and valiantly essays to drive it from the earth. If he is not playing the part of a dissembler, he is certainly crack-brained, and deserves pity rather than ridicule or censure.[16]

[14] *Ibid.,* November 23, 1855.

[15] *Ibid.,* March 21, August 15, 1856. One of Fitzhugh's occasional editorials for the Richmond *Examiner* is also noted, *ibid.,* January 2, 1857.

[16] *Ibid.,* March 6, 1857.

Among the quotations from *Cannibals All!* which Garrison thought particularly delectable were these: "Negroes are never ignorant of the truths of Christianity, all speak intelligible English and are posted up in the ordinary occurrences of the times." "The master enforces decent morality on all." "The women do little hard work, and are protected from the *despotism of their husbands* [Garrison's italics] by their masters." Regarding these observations Garrison observed, "Such idiocy may pass current as wit and wisdom among the cradle-plunderers and slave-drivers at the South, but the rest of the world will rate it at its true value." For Fitzhugh he reserved the special epithet of "this cool audacious defender of the soul-crushing, blood-reeking system of slavery."

In the next issue of the *Liberator* Garrison devoted a special editorial of one and a half columns to "Slavery a Blessing—Freedom a Curse," dealing with the "crazy work which we received," *Cannibals All!* Fitzhugh's insistence that his views were fully sanctioned by Biblical authority aroused the ire of Garrison who denounced these views as typical of the "gospel according to Beelzebub that is preached at the South." [17] The Virginian, said the abolitionist, believed that "Jesus came to abolish free society, to uproot free institutions, to transform the great mass of mankind into goods and merchandize, to establish chattel slavery universally." Only masters, overseers, drivers, and slave dealers were exempt from this universal enslavement.

Against Fitzhugh's assertions regarding the idyllic character of slavery, Garrison thundered that there was the overwhelming testimony of thirty thousand fugitive slaves in Canada and in the North—a "cloud of witnesses" confronting the slavery defenders.

Four millions of people deprived of marriage, of the Bible, of recognized parental and filial consanguinity, of all testimony

[17] *Ibid.*, March 13, 1857.

against their merciless owners and drivers, of all right of self-defence, of all incentives to industry and thrift, of all available legal protection against any and every kind of brutality, of all freedom of locomotion, of all choice of employment, of all free will and conscience, of all education and moral culture, of all rights and all property, and thus sunk to the level of cattle and swine, present the most affecting and the most appalling spectacle to be found beneath the stars. Yet their condition is demoniacally held up by Mr. Fitzhugh, as a model one for all laboring people of the world, who, he maintains, ought to be owned and governed like brute beasts!

He admitted, although with severe qualifications, that the Virginian possessed astonishing adroitness and ingenuity, especially in his attempts to prove free society a failure. It was noteworthy, Garrison thought, that the author had crossed the Atlantic to find cases of extreme destitution and competitive selfishness, scorning the North. How could the conclusion be reached, he asked, that swindling monopoly and oppressive capitalism were the legitimate fruits of freedom? And how dare Fitzhugh assert that intellectual dissenters were infidels and anarchists? What if European philosophers could not agree upon the remedies for capitalist evils?

It is something to be agreed as to the rottenness of the edifice—a rottenness which Mr. F. insanely attributes to liberty but which all the world but himself knows to be wholly attributable to a despotism, kindred in spirit to American slavery, though not at all comparable to it on the score of injustice and villainy. Freedom in the world is, as yet, only a comparative term—not an absolute possession. Where it most abounds, there society is most civilized, refined, prosperous, enlightened, enterprising and safe.

The South might be free of the subversive isms, but so were the dictatorships in contemporary Russia, Italy, and Austria. There could be no isms in an intellectual graveyard. Indeed, he said, Fitzhugh might reason logically that

death was superior to life, since the former was exempt from all care, suffering, and danger; hence, life was a failure. This was the type of logic employed by the Virginian when he ingeniously confounded class legislation, the enemy of liberty, with liberty itself. Liberty then could be accounted a failure.

Garrison's onslaught was too sweeping to escape Southern attention and shortly thereafter the *Liberator* found it expedient to select for comment a lengthy editorial from the Newberry (S.C.) *Rising Sun* which defended Fitzhugh against the abolitionist. The South Carolina editor observed, "Garrison . . . intoxicated with delight, gloats over the production of George Fitzhugh of Port Royal, Va., entitled, 'Cannibals All' . . . and labors to spit forth his venom, spleen and fanaticism on slaveholding States and slaveholders." [18] The Northern masses must be a set of "deluded, crazy, foolish simpletons," the editor thought, to accept such "insane ravings." As for Garrison, himself, the opinion was decided:

A character of his sort is the soil fittest to produce that obstinate bigotry in politics, religion and everything else, which has conducted many a martyr to the block, and is yet to conduct many a man to the gallows.

Cannibals All! continued to rankle in Garrison's mind as an episode at this time reveals. Three Southern youths attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, New York, wrote a personally offensive letter to the editor of the *Liberator* and proposed:

If you will permit yourself to be confined in a large-sized, well-ventilated, and in every way comfortable iron cage, and allow us to make a tour of exhibition of your distinguished person throughout the Southern section of our Union, we pledge ourselves to award you one half of the profits arising therefrom.[19]

[18] *Ibid.*, April 10, 1857.

[19] *Ibid.*, March 6, 1857.

Commenting upon this "specimen of Southern breeding and decency," Garrison replied, "As our substitute for public exhibitions, we propose Mr. George Fitzhugh, of Port Royal, Caroline, Virginia!"

The most extensive discussion of the proslavery book came from the talented British poet, composer, and journalist, Charles Mackay, who visited both North and South during 1857–1858. Mackay was then at the height of his literary and musical reputation; his novels, folk lyrics, poems, and various other books had achieved international recognition. Twenty thousand copies of his song of John Brown of Osawatomie were sold; and the American press hailed his lecture tour on "Songs, National, Historical, and Popular." The *Christian Examiner* of Boston praised Mackay's liberal efforts in behalf of human happiness. Critics attributed to his poetry the force of Burns and the polish of Moore.[20]

Mackay was so impressed with *Cannibals All!* which he regarded as typical of a new wave of Southern militancy that he explained to his English readers of *Life and Liberty in America* it was necessary to understand Fitzhugh's position in order to comprehend the American scene. He devoted an entire chapter of this book on his American tour to the significance of the Virginian's ideas. The proslavery philosophers, he asserted, instead of being content with mere toleration of slavery, now accused those free European states which condemned Negro enslavement "as being false not alone to morality and religion, but to the true principles of trade and to the philanthropy of social science." [21] Slavery, white or black, was now justified by Southern writers who professed to speak ex cathedra as doctors of law on a philosophy "as old as history and as indestructible as human society."

[20] "Charles Mackay," in S. Austin Allibone (ed.), *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature* (Philadelphia, 1870–1871), II, 1172–73.

[21] Charles Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America* (New York, 1859), 248–49.

Among these one of the ablest and most conscientious—a man who writes, as if he believed himself to be the preacher and the apostle of a new science, which is to enlighten the darkened, and reform the corrupted world—is Mr. George Fitz Hugh, of Virginia. This gentleman boldly enunciates the theory, that free society is a failure; and that the best, if not the only hope of civilization, unless it would fall the prey of stronger and honester barbarism, is the re-establishment of Slavery—independently of colour and race—in every part of the world. . . . There are many other writers, both in prose and verse, who have taken up this principle as the social religion of the South, but Mr. Fitz Hugh is the one who has gone most systematically and philosophically into the discussion, and laid down authoritatively a system of Slavery, pure and simple. He would not only enslave the negroes, but the poor Irish and German immigrants, as fast as they arrive in New York, and either send them off to till the ground in the cotton and sugar regions, or sell them at Charleston, or New Orleans, by public auction, to the highest bidder.

Fitzhugh's slogan, he thought, was "Liberty is for the few—slavery, in every form, is for the many." Among the Virginian's observations certain generalizations appeared significant to Mackay: "The customary theories of modern ethical philosophy, whether utilitarian or sentimental, are so fallacious, or so false in their premises and their deductions, as to deserve rejection; and must be replaced by others, founded on a broader philosophical system, and on more Christian principles." "The world will fall back on domestic slavery when all other social forms have failed and been exhausted. That hour may not be far off." "Free society asserts the rights of a few men to the earth. Slavery maintains that it belongs in different degrees to all."

This philosophy, Mackay asserted, consisted of the grossest sensualism, for it rested on the superior material comforts of slaves over free laborers. It seemed to say, "Better be a sleek horse, or a corpulent pig snoozing upon a dunghill, than a lean man, overburdened with anxiety." Fitz-

hugh was oblivious of the great truth that men did not live by bread alone. Had his principles of slavery been acted upon during the period of American colonization, where would the American Republic or Fitzhugh himself be today? "But Mr. Fitz Hugh is a slave already—a slave to his theory," concluded Mackay mockingly.[22]

The Virginian could not afford to overlook Mackay's criticism and when De Bow called his attention to *Life and Liberty in America,* Fitzhugh gladly agreed to review the book. He returned Mackay's introductory compliments by alluding to the Scotsman as one of a class of "truthful, intelligent and appreciative foreigners" to visit the United States, although not without prejudices and partialities. Fitzhugh pointed out the inconsistency of Mackay's attacks on slavery with the sentiment expressed in his poem regarding a steamboat trip down the Mississippi River:

> Whence the sound of music? whence the merry laugh?
> Surely boon companions, who jest, and sing, and quaff.
> No! the slaves rejoicing—happier than the free,
> With guitar and banjo, and burst of revelry.

Why shouldn't the slave rejoice? demanded Fitzhugh. He was going in this instance to a more genial clime and a better home in the South with bright prospects ahead. "But what is to gladden the poor 'Exile of Erin,' or the expelled tenantry of Scotland?" he asked. "The tyrant Augustus drove off shepherds to make room for soldiers. English landlords sacrifice men to grow sheep."

He denied Mackay's statement that slavery and the Southern climate enervated the character of the Sunny South. Not only had his section contributed generously statesmen and soldiers like Washington, but it had colonized a much larger extent of territory than had the North and that was done without benefit of alien immigrants; be-

[22] *Ibid.,* 250.

sides, Southerners produced a larger agricultural surplus than any comparable population.

As for Mackay's attacks upon his book Fitzhugh observed that the critic was entirely in error regarding his assertion that *Cannibals All!* proposed to enslave German and Irish immigrants. The position he had actually taken was this in substance: " 'The social forms of our North and South are each excellent, and should not be changed or tampered with. The social condition of the South is normal, natural, historical, and biblical; that of the North exceptional, but admirably adapted to a new country where lands are cheap and abundant, population sparse, capital but little power to tyrannize over labor, and wages good.' " Upon the crucial fact that freedom had failed in the British Empire, at least, he noted that Mackay and himself were in substantial agreement, for the Scotsman had furnished many pages of description regarding the sufferings of the poorer classes at home.[23]

The *Methodist Quarterly Review* of New York which had several years before published Holmes's eulogy of *Sociology for the South,* now reversed its position on slavery with unfortunate results for Fitzhugh. The Reverend Abel Stevens, a leading Methodist Episcopal clergyman from New York, whose gradual intellectual conversion to the antislavery viewpoint reflected the growing internal disruption of the national church organization, now came boldly forward with an article denouncing slavery. Dr. Stevens, at that time editor of the Methodist *National Magazine* and the *Christian Advocate and Journal,* was already engaged with such men as Gerrit Smith, Professor Benjamin Silliman, and Elihu Burritt, in promoting a national movement for compensated emancipation, a program of moderates which was duly execrated by the Garrisonians.[24]

[23] George Fitzhugh, "Life and Liberty in America," in *De Bow's Review,* XXVII (1859), 515–26.

[24] Boston *Liberator,* September 4, 1857.

Stevens launched out against what he termed the "Great American Apostasy" in his article, "Slavery—The Times," and attempted to prove that the liberal South of Washington and Jefferson had become recreant to its noble past. "Glance along the following extracts," he wrote, "if you would have proof of the sad degeneration, the madness of folly which has overtaken us." Then followed a series of quotations which are of unusual interest since they reveal to what extent Fitzhugh's sentiments had become commonly identified with those of the entire South. Of several pages of extracts nearly all were from *Sociology for the South,* Fitzhugh's editorials in the *Enquirer* and the *Examiner,* or from other Southern newspapers which merely paraphrased these same expressions.

From *Sociology for the South* Stevens had noted these extracts among others: "We would not have your rich, vulgar, licentious bosses and your brutal, insubordinate factory hands in our midst for all 'The Wealth of Ormus and of Ind.' We would not exchange our situation for the countless millions of paupers and criminals who build up and sustain the cowardly, infidel, licentious revolutionary edifice of free society." "Slavery, black or white, is right and necessary." "Nature has made the weak in mind and body slaves."

In the Richmond *Examiner* he noted practically these same ideas—which was not very strange, for Fitzhugh had written them during 1854 and after as an editorial associate of Hughes. Another citation from the *Enquirer,* again a product of the Virginian's pen, deserves extended quotation, because of its interesting variation of Fitzhugh's familiar house-divided theme:

> Repeatedly have we asked the North, "Has not the experiment of universal liberty failed? Are not the evils of free society insufferable? . . ." This gloomy silence is another conclusive proof added to many other conclusive evidences we have furnished, that free society, in the long run, is an impracticable form of

society; it is everywhere starving, demoralizing, and insurrectionary. We repeat, then, that policy and humanity alike forbid the existence of the evils of free society to new people and coming generations. Two opposite and conflicting forms of society cannot, among civilized men, coexist and endure. The one must give way and cease to exist, the other become universal. If free society be unnatural, immoral, unchristian, it must fall, and give way to a slave society—a social system, old as the world, universal as man.[25]

Rhett's Charleston *Mercury* was another of Stevens' witnesses to the degeneration of the South and here, once more, the ubiquitous influence of Fitzhugh was clearly present. Said the *Mercury,* "Slavery is the natural and normal condition of the laboring man, whether white or black. . . . Master and slave is a relation in society as necessary as that of parent and child, and the Northern states will yet have to introduce it." Likewise within the intellectual orbit of Port Royal came the extremist New Orleans *Delta* whose sentiments, taken almost verbatim from the *Enquirer,* were not dissimilar to those of the other witnesses invoked by Stevens. "Modern free society, as at present organized," said the *Delta,* "is radically wrong and rotten. It is self-destroying and can never exist happily and normally until it is qualified by the introduction of some principle equivalent in effect to the institution of Southern negro slavery." This same editorial had already been quoted in full by Greeley's New York *Weekly Tribune* in November, 1856, as evidence of the sinister plot of the slavocracy. The *Delta,* evidently borrowing from *Cannibals All!* as well as from *Sociology for the South,* repeated Fitzhugh's well-worn phrases regarding the failure of free society, slavery as the basis of conservatism, and his anticapitalistic sentiments against industrial societies.[26]

The fact that many antislavery leaders believed, or pro-

[25] Quoted in Abel Stevens, "Slavery—The Times," in *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York), XXXIX (1857), 272.

[26] New York *Weekly Tribune,* November 8, 1856.

fessed to believe, that Fitzhugh's sentiments were those of the entire South, is evident from various sources. Most striking of these proofs is the antislavery pamphlet, "The Patriarchal Institution As Described By Members of Its Own Family," published in 1860 by L. Maria Child of Massachusetts. Mrs. Child was well known for her popular historical novels such as *Hobomok* and *The Rebels* and for her numerous journalistic contributions. In 1833 she had published *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans,* thus actively entering the ranks of the abolitionists, and this had avowedly influenced such prominent men as Channing, Sumner, Thomas W. Higginson, Salmon P. Chase, and Henry Wilson. During 1841–1849 she edited the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* of New York and her emotional idealism came to be a powerful factor in the antislavery crusade. When John Brown lay wounded in his Virginia prison after the Harpers Ferry incident, she awakened national interest by her direct appeal to Governor Wise that she be permitted to nurse Brown.[27] In the Lincoln Presidential campaign the American Anti-Slavery Society decided to publish her attack on the proslavery school.

Mrs. Child's pamphlet adopted the methods of Stevens in proving that the South had undergone a moral revolution, even more profound than the slavery issue would indicate. She quoted twenty extracts from contemporary views as evidence of the truth of early predictions made by the Jeffersonians that slavery would ultimately destroy liberty and republicanism. It is significant to note that of these twenty extracts, three were from Fitzhugh's books, four from his articles in the *Enquirer,* and five contained phrases easily identified with the Virginian's writings, such as the justifiability of slavery, white and black, and the "failure of free society."[28] An additional quotation revealing Fitzhugh's influence which attracted the attention of many Re-

[27] L. Maria Child, *Letters of Lydia Maria Child* (Boston, 1883).
[28] See the criticisms of Abel Stevens, *supra.*

publicans came from the Muscogee *Herald* of Alabama: "*Free* Society! We sicken of the name. What is it but a conglomeration of *greasy mechanics, filthy operatives, small-fisted farmers,* and moon-struck theorists? . . . That is your free society!" The phrase "greasy mechanics" irritated many an antislavery man, and papers like the *Liberator* attributed it to Governor Wise, who was popularly supposed to be the controlling factor behind the Richmond *Enquirer* where the phrase had appeared originally. Actually, it seems almost certain that Fitzhugh was the inspiration for the Alabama paper.

In an endeavor to prove that Southern and Northern Democrats were now in league to accomplish the extension of slavery, Mrs. Child cited fourteen more quotations from the Southern press of which Fitzhugh furnished at least two instances. In his *Enquirer* editorials he had stated: "We must show that African slavery is a moral, religious, natural, and probably, in general, a necessary institution of society. This is the only line of argument that will enable Southern Democrats to maintain the doctrines of State equality and *slavery extension*"; "Policy and humanity alike forbid the extension of the evils of free society to new people and coming generations." Other phrases of Fitzhugh's manufacture came from Senator James M. Mason of Virginia, destined to serve as a delegate from his state to the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy and as Commissioner to Great Britain and France. His capture, together with Slidell, by the Union navy on the British mail steamer *Trent* was to provoke an international crisis. Mason, Mrs. Child pointed out, had declared in the Senate, "It is now almost universally believed, in the South, that slavery is ennobling to both races, white and black." Elsewhere he had remarked, "Free society has failed; and that which is *not* free must be substituted." [29] Fitzhugh was indeed making rapid strides forward.

[29] L. Maria Child (ed.), *The Patriarchal Institution As Described by Members of Its Own Family* (New York, 1860), 5–7.

Roland G. Hazard of Rhode Island, prolific author of many books varying from popular philosophy to reform proposals, and an author likewise of the Republican platform of 1860 upon which Lincoln ran for president, proclaimed a crusade for liberty in a public address at Narragansett. The South, he declared, would now accept nothing less than "an unconditional sacrifice of every principle of democracy and of freedom, upon the altar of the Moloch they worship." This statement he attempted to substantiate by pointing to the Southern Democrats who openly proclaimed that "the slavery of the laborer, black or white, is the natural and healthy condition of society"; and these also asserted that "The experiment at the North had failed, and failed because we have here 'a conglomeration of Greasy Mechanics, Filthy Operatives, and Small Fisted Farmers' who have political rights accorded to them." [80] Again, a "Fitzhughism" had become typical of the South.

The famous Northern journalist, Frederick Law Olmsted, traveling through the South and developing a reputation as an oracle on things Southern, wrote in *The Cotton Kingdom* on the eve of the Civil War:

> Nothing but a reversal of the current of our Northern history for half a century, nothing, in fact, but the enslavement of labour at the North, could in the nature of things, give that security even temporarily, to the capitalists of labour at the South which they need.[81]

As one might expect, Olmsted's documented authority was none other than the Richmond *Enquirer* embodying a selection from Fitzhugh's pen, "While it is far more obvious that negroes should be slaves than whites for they are only fit to labour, not to direct; yet the principle of slavery is itself right, and does not depend upon difference of complexion." [82] Across the Atlantic, the antislavery *British*

[80] *Rowland G. Hazard's Narragansett Speech* (n.p., n.d.).
[81] Frederick L. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom* (New York, 1861), II, 362.
[82] *Ibid.*, 362n.

Quarterly Review labeled as "Southern audacity" the phrase that its editor considered typical of that section, "free society is a failure."[33] The *Review* expressed its amazement that the Democratic party, devoted to this slogan, should nevertheless continue to win support from an American electorate.

Fitzhugh was now well on his way to becoming "the South" despite the anonymous character of much of his writings; and when an abolitionist like Wendell Phillips deplored the extreme tone of the Richmond press in 1856, he had obvious reference to the *Enquirer* and particularly to Fitzhugh.[34] Unquestionably, the Virginian, like his friend Holmes, constituted a host in himself and his startling phrases, left unsigned in so many cases, continued to appear in the pages of *De Bow's Review,* the *Southern Literary Messenger,* the violent proslavery New York *Day Book,* as well as in the occasional articles he submitted to the Richmond newspapers. Although *Cannibals All!* never seems to have attained in the North quite the notoriety of *Sociology for the South,* it added definitely to that caricature of the Southern mind which impressed the antislavery forces as a product of the slaveholder's diabolism.

[33] "Free Society a Failure," in *British Quarterly Review* (London, 1845–1866), XXV (1857), 203, 207.

[34] Boston *Liberator,* July 11, 1856.

Chapter XIV

THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

"MY silence has been owing to absorbing and harassing pursuit of office," apologized Fitzhugh to Holmes in a letter of July, 1857. "I now have an office and a connexion with the press, which together yield me about $3,000." [1] This was written from Washington, where the Fitzhughs had recently arrived to take up a new abode amidst the thousands who composed the growing Federal bureaucracy. The Virginian, now safely ensconced as a law clerk in the office of Attorney General Jeremiah S. Black, had indeed engaged in an "absorbing and harassing pursuit of office." During the first two and one half months of the Buchanan administration, Black had been flooded by more than five hundred applications for employment in his department, besides facing a siege of a veritable army of office seekers who applied in person.[2] The current economic decline, heralding a major crisis, had undoubtedly sharpened the quest for office. Fitzhugh had benefited by two powerful intermediaries, Governor Wise, who had prepared a confidential recommendation to the President, and former Governor John B. Floyd, father-in-law of Holmes, who personally presented this letter.

His own application, written in his ingenuous fashion, possesses considerable autobiographical value:

I have always belonged to the National wing of the Democratic Party—and never, I think, in thirty years differed with your

[1] Fitzhugh to Holmes, July 27, 1857, in Holmes Letter Book.
[2] William N. Brigance, *Jeremiah Sullivan Black* (Philadelphia, 1934), 47.

Excellency as to men or measures. I was associate editor of the Richmond Enquirer during the Canvass, and had for years previous thereto advocated your superior claims to your present elevated position. I have, unrequited, written and spoken as much for my party as any man in Virginia. I am an author and shall continue to write—my chief object in writing has been and will continue to be to preserve the Union. I am now poor, and desire office as well for its emoluments as for the access to books it will afford me. I cordially approve and shall zealously advocate the policy of your administration as I understand it.

The South, I think, will permit me to go further in assailing and denouncing Southern abstractions and sectionalism, than it would permit any one else.

Hence, I feel sure I can serve your administration, the Union, and my country should I get office. I refer you to Gov. Floyd and Gov. Wise as to my qualifications.[3]

Certain points in this letter are quite striking in their nature. Fitzhugh's unconditional promise to support the administration in its future as well as declared policies, is indicative of a personal weakness. As a contributor to various journals he had regularly displayed an extreme docility to editorial demands, sometimes of a sweeping character, that his articles be drastically revised and even altered in essential meaning. Hughes of the Richmond *Examiner* had wielded the editorial pencil vigorously, but while Fitzhugh had acceded, Holmes, also a contributor, had successfully resisted. The Port Royal writer had not understood Holmes's desire for journalistic independence.[4] Fitzhugh's expressed motive "to preserve the Union" was intended with full sincerity, although one may well wonder at the type of propaganda he chose to attain this objective.

His plea regarding poverty and the needs of a literary career reflected a prevailing idea of the uses of government office. Certainly a brilliant galaxy of American literary figures during the mid-century had been directly indebted to

[3] Fitzhugh to Buchanan, March 24, 1857, Files of the Attorney General.
[4] *Id.* to Holmes, [1854?], in Holmes Letter Book.

a Federal position which might have been filled more capably by a less imaginative intelligence: Walt Whitman, Washington Irving, John L. Motley, and George Bancroft among scores of others. The spoils system was not without its public compensations in the days before the classified civil service.

In March, 1857, his application had at first been temporarily set aside by government officials with the comment "Office indefinite." By July the pressure of business in Black's department of California land claims brought Fitzhugh the appointment.[6] His salary as a temporary clerk was modest enough considering his exertions to achieve office —sixteen hundred dollars from July 16, 1857, to June 30 of the following year.[6] Fitzhugh accepted the position upon the theory that it would lead to a far more substantial one. The new task possessed considerable interest, for the California land claims were more than routine title conflicts. Besides the colorful complexity of unraveling Mexican land laws there was the task of detecting the large elements of fraud and fabricated titles which were attached to much of 813 private claims arising from the American acquisition of California. Twelve million acres of the best mineral and agricultural regions in the state represented the chief prizes of a series of lawsuits in which the nation, represented by Attorney General Black, was a party.[7]

Among Fitzhugh's closest associates in Black's office was Archibald Roane of Virginia, also employed as a clerk on the same financial level.[8] Like the newcomer from Port Royal he was primarily interested in a literary career, writing frequently for *De Bow's Review*. In an article published in 1858, "American Literature—Northern and Southern," Roane had accepted the higher ground position of the proslavery militants. "In moral and social science," he

[5] Washington *Star*, quoted in Fredericksburg *News*, July 27, 1857.
[6] Unlabeled Account Book, 1857, Files of the Attorney General.
[7] Brigance, *Jeremiah Sullivan Black*, 48–50.
[8] Unlabeled Account Book, 1857, Files of the Attorney General.

declared, "the works of Prof. Dew, of Prof. Bledsoe, of George Fitzhugh, and of Dr. Smith, of Randolph Macon College, each and all of them are eminently suggestive, philosophical, profound, and logical. The North has given to the world nothing superior upon these subjects." [9] Unlike Fitzhugh, however, Roane based his defense of slavery upon the "hopeless inferiority of the black races," and applauded the racialism of Gobineau.[10] His dislike of democracy was expressed in far more unrestrained terms than those of his associate, and he hoped that Fitzhugh's novel sociology might be the beginning of a countercurrent to stem "democratic absolutism." In a second article of 1858 he wrote:

> The democratic principle, through its abuse, has acquired a fearful momentum, and threatens to sweep with resistless torrent, overwhelming and subverting every barrier erected by the wisdom of time against its progress. . . . Now, it demands an elective judiciary; next, the abolition of all wholesome restraints upon the elective franchise; again, the enactment of a homestead bill giving land to the landless. The most dangerous tendency it has yet exhibited is in the recent attempt, made by vulgar demagogues in its name, to break down the representative principle by referring constitutions and codes to the people in mob-meeting assembled. . . . If it were possible to *democratize* the human mind and reduce all to the same base level, no respect for divine order and subordination would restrain the rude hand of this monster.[11]

Washington, itself, "city of magnificent distances" and impressive to the visitor at night by the radiance of its extensive system of gas lamps, proved thoroughly enjoyable to Fitzhugh. More captious critics like the Englishman, Charles Mackay, noted the disillusionment of seeing the

[9] Archibald Roane, "American Literature—Northern and Southern," in *De Bow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 175.

[10] *Id.*, "Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races," *ibid.*, XXI (1856), 63–70.

[11] *Id.*, "Ross on Slavery and Stiles' Modern Reform," *loc. cit.*, 310.

city by daylight, after observing the glories of a Washington evening. "All is inchoate," he wrote, "straggling, confused, heterogeneous, and incomplete." Some of the leading streets—unimaginatively named after the letters of the alphabet—possessed splendid marble buildings, comparable to the best of any capital in the world, while opposite such edifices or on either side were low brick houses, "crazy wooden sheds, and filthy pigsties, suggestive of the Milesian element in the population." Visitors were usually impressed by the classic government buildings; and Mackay was willing to admit that Washington had great possibilities from the aesthetic viewpoint. Particularly startling to the Englishman was the ultrademocratic spectacle of the President of the United States at the White House shaking hands with all comers, from the courtly and urbane ambassadors of European powers to the " 'Rowdies' from New York, or 'plug-uglies' from Baltimore." [12] Buchanan usually bore this ordeal patiently and with good humor. When Fitzhugh read Mackay's description of Washington as it appeared in 1857–1858, he was inclined to agree with these observations, although stressing the more favorable aspects of capital life.[13]

The city gave the impression of being an overgrown village or a fashionable watering place rather than an urban center. This was largely due to the peculiar balance of its social and economic life; during almost half of the year the city was deserted by the lawmakers and their entourage; and there was disproportionately little independent trade or commerce in the Federal capital. Southerners felt at home amidst the numerous groups of slaves who filled the streets of the capital. These, however, soon discovered the discomforts of walking ice-laden streets in wintertime, and braving whirlwinds of dust and driving rains in the spring; while the fierceness of Washington heat in summer made

[12] Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America*, 77–78.
[13] Fitzhugh, "Life and Liberty in America," *loc. cit.*, 515–16.

the capital anything but an oasis for visitors in midyear.

Among the arrivals in 1857 was Roger A. Pryor, Fitzhugh's friend of *Enquirer* days. Pryor, evidently through the influence of Douglas, had acquired the editorship of the Richmond *South* which was to be published as a Democratic party organ at Washington. Mrs. Pryor later recalled these years through a pleasant haze: "My own pride in the federal city was such that my heart would swell within me at every glimpse of the Capitol. . . . I was wont to watch from my window for the sunset, that I might catch the moment when a point on the unfinished dome glowed like a great blazing star after the sun had really gone down." [14] While the Pryors obtained entrée into the proud society of older residents, led by the wives of the editors of the ultraconservative *National Intelligencer,* Mesdames Gales and Seaton, Fitzhugh apparently did not, for he wrote at this time:

> We have only made the acquaintance of one portion of that society, who constitute, however, a numerous class. These are the clerks and other subordinate officers of the Government, in and about the various Departments. Their very general intelligence, urbanity, refinement, and scholastic accomplishment, have filled us with surprise and admiration.

Such men, he explained, incidentally defending his own modest social position, preferred the quiet routine of minor office to the "fierce competition, the hoarse tumult, and the rough and stormy struggle of ambitious or professional life." [15]

A momentary glimpse of Fitzhugh in Washington is afforded by the recollections of De Bow almost a decade later. A frequent Washington visitor, he had been appointed superintendent of the census under Pierce and was now busily promoting the Southern Commercial Convention at

[14] Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, *My Day: Reminiscences* (New York, 1909), 138–40.

[15] George Fitzhugh, "Washington City," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIV (1858), 508.

Knoxville. "What Mr. Fitzhugh says," he wrote in 1866, "in a vein of irony of the nobler and happier life of the savage and the negro, must be taken *cum grano,* as we have seen that philosopher disport himself in the courtly saloons of the Capital in other days, imbibe the wines of France and puff the regalias of Habana and occasionally indulge himself in a broad cloth suit, which however never retained very long its finish." [16]

The Virginian found much in the capital city to excite speculation which he promptly described in various articles for *De Bow's Review.* He enjoyed viewing the magnificent buildings and parks, and praised the cultural advantages afforded by the libraries, the National Museum, the free lectures at the Smithsonian Institution, the Presidential levées at the White House, and the musical performances given at the Capitol. Soon he was developing a theory of city life which indicated the sociological bent of his thinking. "The town," he asserted, forgetful of his earlier prejudices, "is as natural as the country, for 'it is not good for man to live alone.' " The vitality of cities throughout history appeared to him now as a remarkable phenomenon; particularly noteworthy seemed the influence of such cities as Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem upon human destiny.

Washington, he wrote, was the only "practically democratic" city in America. Its generous provisions for the amusement and intellectual improvement of the masses were in direct contrast to the spectacle elsewhere of private appropriation and monopoly of "all the gifts of God to man." In other cities the necessity for innocent recreation and intellectual pleasure among the poor was ignored. "Our cities," he charged, "are without lungs—without those beautiful and spacious parks that adorn and render healthful the cities of Europe. The poor breathe a fetid atmosphere, from which there is no escape." Only England,

[16] Editorial Note, *ibid.,* A.W.S., II (1866), 145.

he thought, among the nations of Europe, had failed to convert its cities into beauty spots. Alluding to the great financial panic of 1857, he declared in praise of Washington's paternalistic spirit:

Mid the famine and desolation that swept over many of our cities during the last fall and winter, the prosperity of Washington stood undiminished. The rich did not fail, and the poor did not lack abundant and remunerative employment. It will always be so; for, in this national Metropolis, a wise, liberal, and wealthy Government, will ever find remunerative employment for a suffering and destitute laboring class. The citizens of Washington are the best represented people in the Union; for they are represented by the collective wisdom of the Union.[17]

This, then, was Fitzhugh's "practical democracy" for cities: Edmund Burke's ideal of "virtual representation" was infinitely preferable to the ballot box conception of the general will. The class structure must be supported generously by the well-to-do in providing large-scale public works to divert the masses and insure employment. Paternalism in the spirit of Disraeli's "tory socialism" would thus replace exploitation; the sufferings occasioned by major depressions would be mitigated, and the entire social fabric remain secure. These were corollaries of his "slavery principle." He hoped that "wanton, tasteless" private luxury, characteristic of the *nouveaux riches,* would be replaced by "public luxury" and private simplicity. Great fortunes, the flaunting of wealth as an evidence of social station, seemed despicable to him. Oppressive monopoly of property in the Northeastern states, he believed, was an evidence of the decay of practical democracy. He wrote of this section, "The State owns nothing, has reserved nothing for public use and enjoyment." Washington seemed ideal to him, for it represented the spirit of public improvement

[17] Fitzhugh, "Washington City," *loc. cit.,* 506.

characteristic of the Greek democracy of Periclean Athens and the "grandeur and patriotism" of Republican Rome.[18]

The economic crisis of 1857 offered the Virginian considerable possibilities for proslavery propaganda. After an era of extraordinary industrial expansion, particularly marked in overoptimistic railroad construction, the panic had burst forth, beginning with the failure of the powerful Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company in August. While the industrial states felt the full impact of the ensuing dislocation, the South, aided by a constant world demand for cotton and other subtropical products, escaped the direct force of this blow. Fitzhugh declared jubilantly that his economic analysis had been signally demonstrated: the true poverty of the North was now exposed; and the South need not seek to imitate "the filthy, crowded, licentious factories, the mercenary shopkeeping, and the slavish commerce of the North." The glittering cosmopolitan wealth of that section was in reality an "airy nothing":

> Is the merchandise that fills and adorns her ten thousand stores paid for? Does it belong to her or to Liverpool, London and Paris? Are her merchants all solvent, or are half of them insolvent? If we substract from the census half of her (estimated) mercantile and manufacturing wealth, have we not subtracted too little?

Estimating the high cost of insolvency at the North to both creditor and debtor, he concluded that "the whole mercantile and manufacturing wealth of the North is little but a fiction." It represented but the power of credit to tax productive industry. These manufacturers, indebted beyond their means, were living by their credit and their wits. He would further subtract railroad wealth from the list of Northern assets since, he said, they merely represented increased land values already recorded by the census; and he proposed to exclude railroad stock, because debts could

[18] *Id.*, "Private and Public Luxury," *ibid.*, XXIV (1858), 49–55.

never be considered part of national wealth. In fact, he expressed a profound dislike of paper speculations and their results, "Stocks, by means of the idleness and luxury which they beget, are the most alarming evil of modern times."

What was true national wealth? he asked. Certainly not the axiom of political economy, a mere aggregate of individual wealth. In free society such individual wealth was obtained only by pauperizing the masses; hence it tended actually to lessen national wealth. Land and Negroes, the wealth of the South, were genuine wealth because they were productive of the necessaries of life. Luxuries consumed at home, according to Adam Smith, lessened national wealth, because they diminished the number of workers employed at necessities. This was the case of the North with its emphasis on fine homes, expensive furniture, and other luxuries.[19] Curiously enough, neither De Bow, a competent professor of political economy at the University of Louisiana, nor his well-informed collaborators on the *Review,* ever took the trouble to correct the peculiar gyrations in economics displayed by their contributor from Port Royal. It was all--errors included—in a good cause.

In a subsequent article, "The Character and Causes of the Crisis," Fitzhugh attempted to prove that all "trading societies," London, Paris, New York, and Vienna, were insecure basically. Only Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and the South were immune from the periodical bankruptcies of the financial communities.

> Excessive trade, aided by railroads, steamships, mails, and telegraphs, and other modern facilities of intercommunication, have paralyzed productive industry, and made half of Christendom one great gambling shop. Want of permanency and fixedness of property have begotten excessive trade. Modern legislation has made everything vendible, and every species of property unstable.

[19] *Id.,* "Wealth of the North and the South," *loc. cit.,* 587–96.

There were no paupers, bankruptcies, unemployment, or considerable trade in feudal times, he declared, for properties were "*fixed* in the hands of the generous, the noble, the brave, and the pious." There was little room for the exercise of the "detestable faculties" of the "sharp witted speculator." Kings, barons, churchmen acted as trustees for mankind of almost all property and were faithful to their trusts. Famine was unknown and trade detested. When this form of common ownership was replaced by the control of the "cunning and idle," property was no longer to be found in the hands of those who by their labor created it; hence arose the Proudhonian axiom of "Property is theft."

Fortunately, he thought, men were able to apply remedies intuitively to social evils, even before they comprehended their nature and causes and a new species of entails had resulted. "Blatant democracy"—Fitzhugh loved Carlyle's phrases—while denouncing entails by name was busily restoring them in salutary forms. Among these were debt exemptions for forty-acre homesteads in many Northern states; the property of married women was secured from the debts of their husbands in others; the abolition of imprisonment for debt further curtailed the "boasted credit system"; and the South proposed to exempt a few slaves of each master from forced sale. All this meant the increasing fixity and stability of property tenure, true conservative measures designed to "lessen the gambling stock which is attracting men from labor to mere bargain making." True democracy was eminently served by a system of small entails, limiting certain amounts of property from sale, which would prevent undue accumulation of wealth, produce approximate equality of conditions, and attach men to government by making property a permanent institution.

In one of his rare admissions of evils at the South he deplored that "even with us land and negroes are slowly accumulating in fewer hands." "We must give greater se-

curity and fixedness to small properties," he wrote. "Make properties more numerous. Diminish the power of capital by preventing its undue concentration and aggregation." [20] Such economic vagaries, however, could be overlooked by his conservative Southern readers who understood by this time that Fitzhugh never actually discussed any question but slavery and that from a highly commendable viewpoint.

At the same time Pryor and his Richmond *South* were at one with Fitzhugh in making political capital out of the panic of 1857, insisting that only the powerful resources of the South could save the North from bankruptcy:

> As Southern men, we look with great equanimity upon this financial revulsion. It will tend to elucidate the great problem, whether the North or the South is most dependent upon each other. . . . We can now ask, where are the boasted resources of the North?
>
> The present crisis will show that the *slave labor staples of the South* will furnish the means of extrication from commercial indebtedness. It will show the South—comparatively free from distress or embarrassment—able to ride out the storm which the speculation of the North has caused.[21]

This was primarily an appeal to Northern conservatives to support the Union on the ground of their imperative self-interest—a note frequently struck by Fitzhugh.

As a resident of the capital city the proslavery writer was keenly aware of the sectional conflict within the walls of Congress. A later generation, turning the pages of the *Congressional Globe* for these years, might well wonder how the nation's business was transacted amidst the eternal quarrel over slavery which seemed to attach itself to the most irrelevant issues. Few cared to don the mantle of compromise worn by Webster and Clay, but many aspirants

[20] *Id.*, "The Character and Causes of the Crisis," in *De Bow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 27–32.

[21] Quoted in Boston *Liberator*, November 20, 1857.

succeeded to the unyielding tradition of the later Calhoun. Men clad their prejudices with the majesty of eternal moral principles and the antithesis of "North" and "South" assumed an artificial distinctiveness, in terms of separate nationalities. The antislavery majority in the House of Representatives appeared an ominous development in the eyes of Southerners; while the disproportionate power of the slave states in the small Senate chamber served as a challenge to the more populous free states. In the White House a "Northern man with Southern principles" seemed to tip the balance in favor of an anachronistic institution—slavery. The bitterly partisan level of debate reflected the dearth of effective statesmanship during the late fifties and the breakdown of the traditional party system.

The conservatives of the North must understand, Fitzhugh insisted in one of his articles for *De Bow's Review,* that the "slavery principle" was identical with the "conservative principle" which underlay any sound society. Frémont's large sectional vote in 1856 and the antislavery complexion of the House of Representatives proved that this conservatism was endangered because of the threat to the existence of the Union. Conservatism must take its stand against every shade of revolutionary radicalism. It had everything sacred at stake in this world "and the next." Against them was the "whole *active* intellect of Christendom," busily writing novels, poems, philosophical works, essays, lectures, and sermons which directly assailed every governmental relationship. To defend slavery was to defend, necessarily, all existing human institutions since all were equally attacked as a modification of slavery by abolitionists.

> If negro slavery be wrong because it is slavery, then are marriage, and church government, and separate ownership of lands, and parental authority equally wrong, unless it be proved that white slavery, which these institutions occasion, is free from the objections which apply to all other kinds of slavery.

Conservatives, North or South, have not an inch of ground to stand upon, unless they at once boldly and distinctly take the position, that slavery in the abstract, slavery in the general, slavery in principle, is right, natural, and necessary.

He did not mean that Negro slavery was to be defended as an exceptional institution, for this position was untenable. The same arguments and facts for Negro slavery, when carried logically further, proved that slavery in every form was right and necessary "as times, place, and circumstances" dictated. Likewise, he pointed out, the logic of the abolitionist's position, which began with an assertion as to the immorality of slavery, must drive him to the conclusion that all government is slavery and every form of subordination equally so. After all, what was slavery? He offered two definitions: one, "A social status in which the will of the superior controls and directs the will and action of the inferior"; the other, "A social condition in which man becomes the property of his fellow man." Slavery in its full sense was therefore inescapable in any society. It might be a curse or a blessing, depending upon its administration.

Patriotism and necessity dictated that the Union should be preserved. "Our Union," he wrote, "is the great asylum for the starving millions of Europe who have got the means to emigrate, and largely helps to feed and clothe those who are too poor to remove." The entire civilized world was now suffering from insufficient food and clothing. If the American surplus were withdrawn from this meager supply, hunger and nakedness would decimate a large portion of mankind. Arguing that a single famine in Ireland had carried off three hundred thousand souls and compelled three million others to emigrate, he concluded, "A civil war in America would be a potatoe-rot for Christendom."

Those indifferent to disunion, he declared, must be wicked. Diplomatically, he hastened to add for the benefit of the extreme secessionists, "Yet, we do say, that thousands of good men desire it, in order to avert greater evils which

they apprehend from a continuance of the Union." For himself, he believed that disunion would aggravate these evils. While a separate South might be successfully self-sufficient, "a world at war with her institutions, and starving for the want of her products, might not respect her rights." He drew upon his fertile imagination for a picture of a new crusade of hundreds of millions of starving people compelled to undertake an invasion of the South. His emphasis upon the indispensability of Southern products left little room to consider the gigantic harvests of the Northwest alone, besides other food-raising sections.

What was the remedy? More propaganda, he answered:

> We must meet agitation by counter-agitation; propagandism by counter-propagandism. We must establish and support presses, deliver lectures, and write books and essays, to sustain the cause of government against anarchy, of religion against infidelity, of private property against agrarianism, and of female virtue and christian marriage against free-love.[22]

The dozens of articles which Fitzhugh furnished annually to De Bow indicated that he could not be justly accused of failing to do his share of "counter-propagandism."

Northern readers may have been surprised to learn that Fitzhugh did not consider himself an extremist. "We differ," he wrote, "from what are called the extremists of the South; but would not shoot down the sentinels of our camp." They believed that the aggressions of Northern abolitionism would force disunion upon the South; hence they sought secession as the only ultimate redress of their wrongs. "We think," he said, "a victory may yet, perhaps, be won by the South, not by arms, but by Southern thought and European necessities." His belief that results were already forthcoming drew an editorial comment from De Bow: "Alas! that the confidence of our friend should be

[22] George Fitzhugh, "The Conservative Principle, or Social Evils and Their Remedies," in *De Bow's Review*, XXII (1857), 419–31.

based upon so flimsy and unsubstantial a foundation. The wish only can be father to the thought!" [23]

During 1857 Fitzhugh contributed several articles on his perennial theme, "Southern Thought." Most of his suggestions had been made countless times before, but he evidently felt that they could bear considerable repetition. In brief, Southern Thought appeared to be the teaching of Fitzhugh's ideas to the South. Among his more novel contributions was the idea that slavery was a necessary educational institution and as such was "worth ten times all the common schools of the North." He explained this observation:

> Slavery educates, refines, and moralizes the masses by separating them from each other, and bringing them into continual intercourse with masters of superior minds, information, and morality. The laboring class of Europe, associating with nothing above them, learn nothing but crime and immorality from each other, and are well described by Mr. Charles Dickens as "a heaving mass of poverty, ignorance, and crime."

Another unusual defense of slavery was an attempt to prove that slave labor bore the same relationship to free workers as large scale methods and machine industry bore to a less efficient earlier form of production. The South with its thin soil, he asserted, was now producing a larger agricultural surplus than any other population of the same number while maintaining high domestic consumption and a general level of comfort superior to that of any other people.[24] As for abolitionism, he contended that it was one of those historical infatuations, like the crusades, which would ultimately expend its energies, leaving men to wonder at such folly and wickedness.[25]

The Virginian constantly labored to give his oft-

[23] *Id.*, "Southern Thought," *loc. cit.*, 347n.

[24] *Id.*, "Southern Thought Again," *De Bow's Review*, XXIII (1857), 449–62.

[25] *Id.*, "Southern Thought," *loc. cit.*, 337–49.

expressed ideas new forms in his articles for *De Bow's Review*. He elaborated the theory of land monopoly which he had attributed to a retired Port Royal lawyer in *Cannibals All!* This was the idea that land monopoly, or its equivalent, the power of capital over labor, was the parent and sustainer of civilization since it compelled the creation of disciplined labor. Secondly, he reasoned that property in man was the only real property. This surprising thesis was apparently derived from his theory that labor was the source of all value and that free labor merely meant slavery to capital. Thirdly, he scandalized some by his contention that the white race was the "true and best slave race." By this, all that was intended was his belief that the Caucasian was more susceptible to civilized restraints and disciplined activity than the Negro, Indian, or other groups. These theories, he explained to his readers, were wholly original with him—apparently he had forgotten his anonymous Port Royal friend—and had received the approbation of "distinguished scholars and statesmen" from both sections as well as the support of "some of the leading papers of the Union." [26]

An occasional plunge into the ancient classics brought forth additional fruits for his proslavery writings. Much as Fitzhugh professed the love of a Southern country gentleman for the classics, he seemed incapable of any literary discussion apart from the all-consuming desire to enlist the ancients in the cause of the South. He recognized a kindred conservative in Aristophanes and hailed his satire, *Ecclesiazusae,* dealing with women's rights "and other agrarian and socialistic doctrines then prevalent in Athens." "It is in the main," claimed the Virginian, "a faithful picture of the isms of the North, and of Western Europe, except that our modern socialists exceed somewhat in absurdity and

[26] *Id.*, "Origin of Civilization—What Is Property?—Which Is the Best Slave Race?" in *De Bow's Review,* XXV (1858), 653–64.

profanity the Black Republicans, and strongminded women of Athens."

Among the Black Republicans in whom ancient Greece had unwittingly gloried was Plato himself. The *Republic,* with its unconventional marriage relations and its artificial Utopianism, seemed to Fitzhugh the intellectual ancestor of Fourierism and its radical American disciples from Greeley to Garrison. "May not Athenian corruption and effeminacy," asked the Virginian, "have grown out of the Greeleyite isms inculcated by Plato, and may not the sound and natural philosophy of Aristotle have formed the character of Alexander and his invincible Macedonians?" [27] He posed the antithesis of Plato, proposing "to throw husbands, wives and children into a sort of common public stock" against Aristotle, who considered it the first duty of the State to preserve the family.[28]

In 1857 Fitzhugh expressed for the first time a note of admiration for Calhoun. He had always disliked the secessionist leanings of the famous South Carolina statesman and opposed his political ambitions. Now, after reading Calhoun's *Disquisition on Government,* he found himself in agreement with the latter's theory of the "concurrent majority," or compromise of conflicting sectional interests, and quoted approvingly Calhoun's statement that the power to plan and construct constitutional governments was beyond mere human sagacity. Fitzhugh went on to praise the South Carolinian's book as superior to that of any Southern college text.[29]

As the end of his temporary appointment in Black's office approached, Fitzhugh became deeply concerned over the prospect of renewal. The Attorney General, he explained in a letter to President Buchanan, had assured

[27] *Id.,* "Black Republicanism in Athens," *ibid.,* XXIII (1857), 20–26.
[28] *Id.,* "The Politics and Economics of Aristotle and Mr. Calhoun," *ibid.,* 163–72.
[29] *Ibid.*

him that his duties had been performed in an entirely satisfactory manner and promised on several occasions to recommend Fitzhugh for a better position.[30] He asked that he be given some office in Washington of a more permanent character, and once more recounted his past services to the President and the Democratic party. One portion of his letter is of particular interest for the light it casts on its author:

> Since I came to Washington I have been continually [a supporter of] your administration in papers and Reviews. I brought De Bow's Review into its support. My friends tell me I lead the Southern mind. I believe I influence it. Should I obtain office I shall continue actively to defend your administration. It is the first profoundly conservative administration—and its action corresponds with its professions. The anarchy so prevalent in the country makes such an administration necessary. Your mission cannot as yet be understood by the many, who do not see that "Reaction" which has generally set in, and requiring more and stricter rule.
>
> Last year I thought disunion imminent and warned the country repeatedly through the Press of the North and the South, that nothing but the confidence of the people in the ability and nationality of your administration kept the Union together, and that there was much reason to apprehend that Mr. Buchanan might be the "last of the Presidents," unless there was some pacific solution of sectional difficulties. The danger is not past—altho you have done much, very much, to allay discord and restore peace.[31]

Fitzhugh's mention of the Northern press probably refers to the New York *Day Book,* in whose extravagant proslavery columns the Virginian contributed occasional articles at this time. Its editor, Dr. Van Evrie, was a close friend and Fitzhugh was ultimately to accept the racialist ideas of the New Yorker. Northerners, including Lincoln himself,

[30] Memorandum of George Fitzhugh, June 23, 1858, Files of the Attorney General.

[31] Fitzhugh to Buchanan, June 23, 1858, *ibid.*

looked upon the *Day Book* as representative of Southern opinion, an evaluation which was scarcely true, except for some of the "fire-eating" politicians below Mason and Dixon's line.[32]

His letter was supported by a petition signed by some twenty-seven prominent Southerners, including Alexander H. Stephens, Thomas Ruffin, John Letcher, Robert M. T. Hunter, and Muscoe R. H. Garnett. The petition praised Fitzhugh's abilities, his party "regularity," and his unusual literary contributions. It was requested that he be given a permanent position with a "comfortable income." [33]

Unfortunately, these blandishments failed and if President Buchanan felt any deep concern for the applicant it was certainly not revealed by the routine manner in which this correspondence was noted and filed. Attorney General Black, faced by the hostility of the House Ways and Means Committee, was compelled to bow to a Congressional demand that the appropriations for the California Land Claims investigation be drastically cut. Vainly Black protested that his office had already uncovered frauds of the first magnitude and that further prosecution of Federal rights required a staff of able law clerks each at a salary of at least three thousand dollars.[34] Whatever the motives of Congress, thrift or partisanship, the Attorney General was forced to reduce his staff to a skeleton unit; and Fitzhugh left together with scores of other temporary assistants. Loyally, however, the Virginian continued to support the Buchanan administration in the press to the very end.

[32] Unfortunately, the present scattered state of the files of the New York *Day Book* has not permitted a successful search for Fitzhugh's articles in that newspaper.

[33] "Petition in Behalf of George Fitzhugh—1858," Files of the Attorney General.

[34] "Expenditures on Account of Private Land Claims in California," *House Executive Documents*, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., XII, No. 84.

Chapter XV

THE REVIVAL OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

DURING the latter fifties a fresh sectional conflict arose which threatened for a time to become the pivotal issue upon which secessionists might take their stand. This was the controversy over the importation of African slaves into the plantations of the lower South. Congressional legislation, nationally reinforced by state law and public opinion, had apparently placed such importations beyond the pale of conventional society. Nevertheless, by 1859 a powerfully organized minority led by South Carolina and Louisiana and vociferously supported by George Fitzhugh in *De Bow's Review,* seemed on the threshold of success in making the reopening of the slave trade a test for Southern militancy. Only secession itself, with the obvious necessity of placating the border states which desired a market for their surplus slaves, halted the persistent propaganda in behalf of the African slave trade.

The recurrent sectional crises, particularly the struggle over Kansas, had demonstrated to the South its hopeless numerical inferiority, a situation aggravated by the steady influx of European laborers to the North. At the same time a sudden increase in the world market for tropical products made such plantation areas acutely conscious of the inadequacy of their labor supply.[1] In response to economic pres-

[1] The New York *Herald,* May 10, 1858, although professing opposition to the African slave trade, admitted, "As with the rapid increase of the white population of the different countries we must either calculate upon a large increase of slave labor or an enormous rise in the necessaries of life, it is

sure England, France, and Spain, despite legislation prohibiting the slave trade, gave serious consideration during the middle fifties to various projects for the increase of forced labor in their colonies, whether in the form of "apprenticed Africans" or East Indian coolies. Illicit importations of Africans into these colonies soon followed, promoted in large part by American slavers of New York, Boston, and Baltimore.[2]

Southern plantation owners, observing the rise of slave prices to fantastic heights, could scarcely view with equanimity the labor measures taken by their foreign rivals. In the deep South the shortage of workers provoked intense discussion in some quarters regarding the growing difficulty of nonslaveholders in entering the ranks of those owning slaves, and awakened a corresponding fear among others that the institution of slavery rested on too narrow a class basis of wealthy planters for its preservation.[3] Virginia, enjoying a revival of tobacco culture, found the high cost of slaves and of Negro hire so serious as to encourage experiments in white labor for the tobacco warehouses.[4]

Much of the story of the ensuing agitation for African slaves can be told in the career of L. W. Spratt of Charleston, whom Greeley was to give the derisive title of "philosopher of the new African slave trade." [5] Spratt's activities in this direction appear ubiquitous: as editor of the Charleston

as clear as noonday that the philanthropic theories entertained on this subject must give place to the inexorable conditions of our material wants."

[2] *House Executive Documents,* 36 Cong., 2 Sess., IV, 36–40, 50, 67, 70, 101. According to Lord Brougham's speech in Parliament, the new governor of Cuba, General Concha, had been selected by Spain in keeping with a policy of secretly restoring the illicit slave importations. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates,* Third Series (London, 1830–1891), CLII, Pt. I, 1859 Sess., 390–91; New York *Herald,* June 10, July 29, 1857; April 23, July 26, 1858.

[3] Edward Deloney, "The South Demands More Negro Labor," in *De Bow's Review,* XXV (1858), 491–506; Charleston *Mercury,* December 14, 1858.

[4] Fredericksburg *News,* June 10, 1859. The most satisfactory evaluation of the economic forces involved appears in Robert R. Russel, *Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism, 1840–1861* (Urbana, Ill., 1924).

[5] New York *Weekly Tribune,* August 20, 1859.

Standard he displayed a mastery of propaganda technique; in the chamber of the South Carolina House of Representatives he was virtually floor leader, marshaling the forces of parliamentary strategy in behalf of the slave trade; and in the local courts crews of slavers could find in him an eloquent, sympathetic counsel. Owning no slaves himself[6] Spratt urged the diffusion of such property and in 1853 his newspaper set up a trial balloon by demanding the reopening of the African slave trade, but the response was discouraging. Most Southern journals ignored the suggestion and the rest, with the notable exceptions of the Charleston *Mercury* and the Richmond *Examiner,* deprecated the step as provocative.

During 1854 Spratt inspired a movement to defend slavery by "active aggression," an aim to be promoted by the repeal of the Federal and state laws abolishing the foreign slave trade.[7] He won over Governor Adams to his program in 1856, when the revival of the African slave trade became the chief topic of the gubernatorial message, but failed to carry with him the South Carolina legislature. The New Orleans *Delta,* under his sponsorship, became the leading organ of the slave trade agitation and after 1855 the annual Southern commercial conventions became deeply enmeshed in bitter debate over the subject.

During the spring of 1857 Spratt enlisted the powerful advocacy of De Bow and his *Review.* At various times the Louisianian shone forth as an aggressive champion of the new orthodox tenets of proslavery thought. As president of the Southern Commercial Convention at Knoxville he maneuvered the selection of a special committee, made up of sympathetic members, to study the revival of the slave

[6] Spratt owned real estate assessed at $9,900 and had an annual cash income from various sources of $1,000. There is no evidence that he was a slaveholder himself. *List of the Taxpayers of the City of Charleston for 1860* (Charleston, 1861), 258.

[7] "Report of Consul R. Bunch of Charleston," in *British and Foreign State Papers, 1854–55* (London, 1865), XLV, 1155–57.

trade. On the floor of later conventions his eloquent support of Spratt gained important adherents; and as the founder of the "African Labor Supply Association" he became the spearhead of a large wing of Southern extremists. Most important of all was his propagandistic activity in *De Bow's Review,* which was converted into the outstanding organ of the African slave trade party. Chief among his lieutenants in the field of propaganda was George Fitzhugh, the most prolific contributor to the *Review.*[8]

Perhaps on no other subject in his repertoire of proslavery arguments did Fitzhugh reverse himself so completely as he did concerning the revival of the African slave trade. In *Sociology for the South,* written at the beginning of the Spratt movement, he had declared his full agreement with Southern condemnation of the traffic. He argued that American slavery, after a long evolution, had become milder due to the increasing intellectual adaptation of the Negro to the white man's level. Revival of the trade would mean a return to its pristine cruelty and a consequent brutality towards the new slaves. Slavery by conquest, he wrote, might be beneficial, "But slavery brought about by hunting and catching Africans like beasts, and then exposing them to the horrors of the middle passage, is quite a different thing." Only the North could favor such a proposal because of the profitable ventures of the "slaver"; the South, he believed, would suffer from the decline in value of the existing slaves in that section.[9]

There was still no hint of a changed attitude in *Cannibals All!* completed in August, 1856. He wrote that the African slave trade shocked his sense of humanity fully as much as it did the abolitionist. "The foreign slave trade," he asserted flatly, "especially the cooley trade, is the most inhuman pursuit in which man ever engaged. Equally inhuman

[8] For a detailed account of this movement, see Harvey Wish, "The Revival of the African Slave Trade in the United States, 1855–60," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids, Ia.), XXVII (1941), 569–88.

[9] Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South,* 210.

to the victims which it imports, and to the old slaves, whose treatment and condition it renders intolerably cruel." Evidently influenced by the fact that Virginia was the leading slave-exporting state, he claimed that the natural increase of slaves would suffice to meet the demand of the lower South. Since Africans and coolies cost less than rearing American slaves, he feared that this slave trade would induce masters to work their old slaves to death and buy new ones from abroad.[10]

One can only conjecture the reasons for Fitzhugh's sudden shift a few months later to the ranks of the most uncompromising advocates of reopening the African slave trade, not a whit behind Spratt and De Bow in militancy. Fitzhugh rarely disagreed with his editor in fundamental policy; with the *Examiner* he had followed the note struck by Hughes; on the rival *Enquirer* he accepted the policies of Pryor; and now on *De Bow's Review* he gravitated naturally to the cause which was closest to the editor's heart. The compromises and inconsistencies of the propagandist were natural for a man who was primarily concerned with influencing public opinion, rather than with achieving the intellectual integrity of the philosopher. As a connoisseur in the gentle art of propaganda Fitzhugh recognized the value of the African slave trade issue in preserving the resistance of the South to Northern encroachments. Like Spratt he too preached the importance of "slavery aggressions."

Simultaneously with De Bow's presidency of the Southern Commercial Convention in 1857 at Knoxville, where the slave trade issue became a major one, Fitzhugh opened his journalistic fire on the opponents of revival. De Bow himself wrote a prefatory note to his first article on the subject. "Mr. Fitzhugh," he said, "was the first writer to propound the theory that 'domestic slavery is a natural, normal, and in general, necessary institution of civilized society';

[10] *Id., Cannibals All!* 337.

and still, although his theory is adopted by many, he is almost its only active working advocate." [11]

The article pointed out that the emancipation of West Indian and South American Negroes had greatly diminished the world supply of tropical products, enhanced their price, trebled the cost of Southern slaves, and stimulated renewed activity among African slavers. England was now instituting a Negro apprentice system far more cruel than the orthodox slave trade. Since female apprentices were often undesirable, families were separated; the temporary nature of the apprenticeship made it advantageous for employers to work these Negroes to death; in turn, importations had to be made frequently to supply this type of labor. An endless trade was set up instead of the African slave system which would die a natural death as soon as the market was supplied. Ultimately the border slave states could satisfy Southern needs by their natural increase of Negroes.

He turned to attack the propriety of maintaining the joint African squadron of Britain and the United States. The health and very lives of the sailors were jeopardized by serving in a patrol off pestilent coasts. Not only was the squadron ineffective but its existence, he said, aggravated the evils of the slave trade by increasing the profits to be derived from a successful cargo of Negroes. Like the ancient slave trade of the Levant, still vigorous at this late day, the African traffic displayed similar traits of persistence. All nations which were sane and honest permitted others to decide for themselves the question of morality involved in this business.

Pretending that he awaited further facts to decide upon the expediency of reopening the slave trade, he asked, nevertheless, whether the United States should not participate in a trade it was unable to halt. Certainly, he de-

[11] *Id.*, "The Conservative Principle; or Social Evils and Their Remedies: Part II—The Slave Trade," in *De Bow's Review*, XXII (1857), 449.

clared, the North would benefit by the legalizing of the traffic as it had in colonial days and continued, in appreciable measure, at the present day. "It built up Liverpool; gave the first great impulse to our Northern commerce—was reluctantly abandoned by the mercantile interests of England and our North, and is now carried on extensively in defiance of law by several cities of the Union." In fact, the North benefited from slavery itself as the medieval Hanse cities benefited indirectly from serfdom. Prosperity and even civilization required the renewal of the slave trade in order to reduce the costs of necessaries and luxuries.[12]

Nor would the Southern white worker suffer. He would have fewer white immigrant competitors when slaves became more adequate in number. By restricting the Negroes to the coarser employments, the white worker would enjoy a monopoly of the best tasks. "As new fetters were imposed on the now idle, savage cannibal negro, the white laborer would find his chain less galling, and gradually dropping from his limbs." Abolitionists were attempting to reverse this process. "They are removing the fetters from the negro to impose them on the white man."

All should investigate the question, he wrote—with the assurance of one who had found the answer—whether the legalized African slave trade would not be more humane than the present illegal one. He also wished to discover whether the condition of the Negro in Africa was superior to that of the American Negro. It was necessary to know the facts regarding the morals, industry, intelligence, religion, and general usefulness to society of the free Negroes in the West Indies, South America, and in the United States. That Fitzhugh had already made up his mind is clear from his comment, "Why do we hunt Indians with bloodhounds from the useless swamps of Florida, and leave Jamaica and St. Domingo, Mexico and South America to be infested,

[12] *Ibid.*, 450–51.

not inhabited, by free negroes? Was it right to take St. Domingo from the Indians and hand it over to the negroes?" Let us determine, he asked, "whether we shall legalize, regulate, and humanize a trade which is as old, as natural, and irresistible as the tides of the ocean."

That Fitzhugh wished action, rather than deliberation, is clear from his article despite his claims to the contrary. Whites were starving, he warned ominously, while Americans deliberated. Should renewal be denied, an avalanche of suffering European immigrants would descend upon the Northeast and transfer famine, turbulence, and crime to our shores. Caustically, he asked why Seward should not invite a Congressional investigation as to whether the African slave trade was not demanded by the doctrines of the higher law.

The North charged, he said, that slavery was aggressive and must be overthrown. "Yes," he replied, "slavery is aggressive—aggressive everywhere, less so in the South than the North or Europe. It is the *'vis medicatrix naturae,'* trying to heal the wound which 'rosewater' philanthropy has inflicted." Emancipation and the consequent shortage of slave labor accounted for William Walker's filibustering in Nicaragua, the annexation of Texas, African apprentices, Border Ruffians in Kansas, New England slavers, and the French seizure of Algiers. Borrowing from the vituperative vocabulary of Carlyle, he went on to denounce "rosewater philanthropy."

> Since the days of Wilberforce, Clarkson, and the benevolent Howard, the world has been infested and persecuted with a "rose-water philanthropy," which aggravates human ills by taxing the virtuous and industrious to relieve the worthless, indolent, and criminal. . . . The fillibuster is the true philanthropist, for he expels the worthless savage and idler to make room for the intelligent, enterprising, and industrious. . . . Walker's is a natural operation, and even if he fail he will be followed by those who "will not fail." Nature impels

to fillibustering, and properly regulated, it is right and promotive of general good.

His final point showed the acuteness of the propagandist. The slave patrol and the laws against the traffic inferentially condemned both the slave trade and *slavery itself*. "We are *now* satisfied," he wrote, "that the South cannot, consistently, approve the sentence passed by christendom on the slave trade, and yet justify slaveholding." [13] This position was soon taken up by other slavery militants, like Yancey of Alabama and others.

De Bow had already announced that he would comment upon Fitzhugh's important article and he proceeded to show that it was too mild for his tastes:

> We do not admit this trade to have less of humanity than other kinds of individual exportation. The foreign immigration trade, the Coolie trade, the Liberia settlement affair, the early conquest of America from the savage, the present reclamation of the backwoods, the opening of Texas and California, the pioneering of Walker, all have their horrors, their frightful hecatombs of human lives, their violent and coerced sunderings of domestic relations, their crimes, and their groanings. The car of civilization, like that Juggernaut, demands all this.

Thus bluntly did De Bow state the case for Southern imperialism. Triumphantly he quoted the words of Prime Minister Peel who had met the disclosures regarding the horrors of mining and factory life and the pauperized homes of millions, with the comment that this was the *"price of civilization."* [14]

Fitzhugh's second article on the slave trade, "The Middle Passage: Or, Suffering of Slave and Free Immigrants," was apparently intended to soothe the editor. It was actually a far more lame affair than the first paper, seeking to maintain that the white immigrant bound for America was exploited more severely than the slaves on the Middle

[13] *Ibid.*, 459. [14] "Editorial Miscellanies," *ibid.*, 554–55.

Passage. Since the European immigrant had his fare prepaid "the sooner he is thrown overboard to the sharks, the better for the owner of the passenger ship." Apparently aware of the weakness of this analogy, he shifted his ground and argued that, after all, the sufferings of the Middle Passage were comparable to the privations of pioneers in the New World. Besides, he believed that the worst abuses of the slave trade would soon disappear if the traffic were regulated by law.[15]

Just as this article borrowed De Bow's suggestion regarding the similarity of suffering among various types of immigrants, free or slave, another paper, "Southern Thought," emphasized the imperialistic theory favored by the publisher:

> The next inevitable step will be to approve and vindicate the conduct of Hercules, and Moses, and Joshua, and the discoverers and settlers of America, who have conquered, enslaved, and exterminated savages, just as fast as might be necessary to make room for free civilized whites. This is the only philosophy that can justify the subjugation of Algiers or the hundred southern conquests and annexations of England; and this philosophy is consistent with Southern thought and practices, but wholly at war with the maudlin sentimentality of Hannah More, Wilberforce, and Lord Brougham.

Since England and France, representatives of free society, were actively engaged in a disguised slave trade, they must justify their practices by adopting and following "Southern thought." [16]

In a subsequent paper, "Wealth of the North and the South," he struck a new note. Not only would a revived slave trade give the North cheaper raw materials and enlarge her domestic market, but it would block disunionist

[15] George Fitzhugh, "The Middle Passage; or, Suffering of Slave and Free Immigrants," *ibid.*, 570–83.

[16] *Id.*, "Southern Thought," *loc. cit.*, 337; *id.*, "Southern Thought Again," *loc. cit.*, 449–62.

ideals by a solid element of reciprocal self-interest. Fitzhugh pretended that the opposition could come only from "a few inconsiderate Southern slaveholders," who might object because the price of their slaves and slave products would decline.

Southern lands would appreciate in value; new lands would be brought into cultivation; the South would retain its virtual monopoly of cotton production. Texas would be speedily settled; Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, and Maryland would certainly use their vacant lands if slaves could be obtained at two hundred dollars each. In his most exaggerated fashion he asserted, "It is most probable that New York, Pennsylvania and the whole Northwest would also become slaveholding." At the same time he declared that the struggle for slavery extension in the territories must be continued to accommodate the natural increase of slaves. The idyllic picture of North and South, united by economic self-interest, was now shattered by his remark that "an exasperated South will blow the Union to shivers, if hordes of Northern immigrants continue to seize upon and monopolize the whole of that territory, which she [the South] chiefly acquired, despite of much Northern opposition." Through the revived African slave trade the South *would* successfully contend for its share of the new territories.[17]

Meanwhile, Fitzhugh's former associate, Roger A. Pryor, after an earlier period of sympathetic interest in the proposal to legalize the African slave trade, withdrew his support because of its growing political implications. At the Montgomery meeting of the Southern Commercial Convention held in May, 1858, he expressed the policy of his paper, the Richmond *South,* in a scathing attack on Spratt of South Carolina:

I affirm that neither history nor posterity would applaud us in staking the Union on the revival of the slave trade. (Applause).

[17] *Id.,* "Wealth of the North and the South," *loc. cit.,* 592.

I intend no disrespect to the gentleman from South Carolina when I declare that it is an unworthy issue; that it is a painful proposition; that it is repugnant to the instincts of Southern chivalry. (Applause). . . . If you intend to dissolve the Union, say so in manly and explicit language . . . and we of Virginia will be prepared to back, or to give reason for abiding in the Union.[18]

Pryor's speech was widely heralded in the South and did much to recover ground for those who had been overcome by the well-organized Spratt–De Bow forces. Thereafter the movement sank into decline. Fitzhugh, however, clung persistently to the "last ditch" fight of *De Bow's Review* and Spratt's journalistic followers.

Meanwhile, secret importations of Africans, numbering in the thousands, took place during 1858–1860. Soon the Federal courts were compelled to take cognizance of actual slavers in the harbors of the lower South. In Charleston, where Spratt became counsel for the crews of the vessels *Brothers* and the *Echo,* both slavers were freed despite overwhelming evidence of guilt. Spratt, in a long oration at the *Echo* trial, demanded that the Federal courts of the South become a "breakwater against aggression" by openly supporting the African slave trade.[19] The question of punishing purchasers of African slaves found local legal opinion divided and grand juries reflected these differences of opinion.[20] Many Southern newspapers, however, demanded the extreme penalty for slavers.

In Congress, Emerson Etheridge, Whig representative from Tennessee, decided to challenge the slave trade faction into open conflict, and accused them of plotting secession. He proposed that the House condemn all suggestions for the revival of the trade as "shocking to the moral senti-

[18] Richmond *South,* May 17, 18, 24, 1858.

[19] Charleston *Mercury,* September 11, 16, December 6, 1858; January 13, 18, February 17, 1859; New York *Herald,* September 6, December 1, 4, 1858; January 19, 1859.

[20] Cf. the conflicting decisions in *26 Federal Cases,* 227, and *25 Federal Cases,* 1375.

ment of the enlightened portion of mankind." This resolution, according to his own account, "fell as a bombshell into the Democratic ranks," but it was carried by a vote of 152 to 57, with most of the negative coming from unanimous delegations of the Cotton Kingdom.[21] In Etheridge's speech on the slave trade of February, 1857, he launched an attack on the extremists of the South, which was almost entirely an assault on Fitzhugh:

I spoke of certain very extraordinary opinions which, during the last year, were avowed by various editors, authors, politicians, and public men of the South. In my opinion, they are as little defensible, and as well calculated to do the South an injury as the most extravagant declarations of Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, or William Lloyd Garrison. I have now before me a book published in Richmond, Virginia, in 1854. It is styled "Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society; by George Fitzhugh." Many southern Democratic newspapers and politicans have spoken of it approvingly, or advanced sentiments quite as indefensible as any avowed by the author. Among many other things, quite as objectionable, he says:

"Make the laboring man the slave of one man, instead of the slave of society, and he would be far better off." "Two hundred years of liberty have made white laborers a pauper banditti." "Free society has failed, and that which is not free must be substituted."

"Say the Abolitionists: Man ought not to have property in man. What a dreary, cold, bleak, inhospitable world this would be, with such a doctrine carried into practice!" . . . "Slavery has been too universal not to be necessary to nature, and man struggles in vain against nature." . . . "Free society is a monstrous abortion, and slavery the healthy, beautiful and natural being which they are trying unconsciously to adopt." . . . "Slavery, black or white, is right and necessary."

Like other critics of Southern extremism Etheridge chose as another example of this type Fitzhugh's notorious house-

[21] *Cong. Globe,* 34 Cong., 3 Sess., Pt. II, 364–65; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States* (Washington, 1856), 34 Cong., 3 Sess., 105, 111.

divided editorial of May 6, 1856, in the Richmond *Enquirer:* " 'Two opposite and conflicting forms of society cannot, among civilized men, coexist and endure. The one must give way and cease to exist, the other become universal.' " Etheridge completed his demonstration by two more citations, one from the Richmond *Examiner,* the other from the Muscogee (Ala.) *Herald,* both of which clearly reflected Fitzhugh's peculiar vocabulary.[22] Other congressmen were to repeat Etheridge's attack on Fitzhugh's ideas during each of the ensuing years before the Civil War.

In 1859, during the sensational trials of the various slavers in Southern courts, Fitzhugh wrote another series of articles for reviving the African slave trade. In a paper on "The Administration and the Slave Trade" he praised Buchanan's secretary of state, Lewis Cass, for his assertion to Lord Napier that "The slave trade has been recognized by the nations of the earth as a lawful commerce, from the earliest period of history." Cass had argued that the new profits of the trade had relaxed public opinion in Europe and made suppression of the slaver more difficult. The climate, the unco-operative attitude of the natives, the tricks of the slave traders, and the long coastline, made the blockade increasingly ineffective.

Since the administration admitted that there was nothing inherently evil in the slave trade, argued Fitzhugh, why did it not direct a nolle prosequi to be entered in the Federal courts in the case of the slaver *Echo?* If these men were convicted, then it was the duty of Buchanan to pardon them. Against the new French and British competition arising from the coolie and Negro apprentice trade, the South faced ruin. Hence the legalization of the African slave trade must take place. "No other measure," he insisted, "can save the Union from dissolution; for without the introduction of more slaves, the South can never settle another territory; and she will not submit to the monopoly

22 *Cong. Globe,* 34 Cong., 3 Sess., 369.

by the North, of all that territory which she was chiefly instrumental in acquiring." Repeating that legal condemnation of the foreign slave trade implied a similar condemnation of slavery itself, he concluded, "No administration can, or should, retain the confidence, respect, or support of the South, that is not ready to blot out this foul imputation from our statute-books." [23]

Even more crude in sensibilities was his article, "Missionary Failures," which he had planned after an evening's conversation with his friend Archibald Roane of Washington. He began by praising the self-sacrificing zeal of the missionaries and regretting their "universal failures." It was not easy, he observed sympathetically, to coax savages to civilization and Christianity. Then came his proposal, "Now if the missionaries, instead of feeding and clothing and making presents to the savages, would catch them, enslave them, and put them to constant work, they might speedily and certainly civilize and Christianize them." The slave trade, he said, was originally intended as a means of converting the heathen and long experience had proved that it was the only available means. He attempted to reinforce these observations by theorizing that civilization could exist only where the soil is appropriated by a few; elsewhere was savagery; hence arose the necessity of soil seizure and enslavement as an educational device. Missionaries, he declared, ought to inform the public whether a humanely regulated slave trade was not the only practical means of converting the heathen.

Turning for the first time to the Southern opponents of the slave trade, he attempted to meet the argument that renewal meant a lessening of wages for laboring whites. "Be it so! Then the existence of negro slavery now injures those whites and should be abolished. Its opponents will find

[23] George Fitzhugh, "The Administration and the Slave Trade," in *De Bow's Review,* XXVI (1859), 144–48.

themselves cheek by jowl with the abolitionists in using this argument." Besides, the argument was untrue. "Negro slavery, when abundant, elevates the white laboring class and increases their wages, by furnishing them respectable mechanical, commercial, and professional occupation."

Did the Constitution forbid the slave trade? he asked in a truculent mood. "Then the Constitution deprives us of equal right, makes us dependent and tributary—enslaves us, and we should speedily dissolve our unequal union, to get rid of a partial and oppressive Constitution." But it did not—except by implication. Congress possessed power to regulate foreign and domestic commerce and a negative provision existed prohibiting that body from abolishing the foreign slave trade prior to 1808. Fitzhugh thought that the obvious implication as to Congressional control over the foreign slave trade was insufficient and ambiguous. Was it not monstrous, he asked, to supply by construction a defect in the Constitution by making a universal moral practice immoral? [24]

Although these articles on the slave trade attracted the attention of the South and the abolitionist press, they were less influential than his earlier writings. During the late fifties *De Bow's Review* contained many articles on the subject, some of them far more extreme than Fitzhugh's papers. Hostile readers could find excellent ammunition for the antislavery cause in the slave trade articles of De Bow and Spratt, so that the Virginian could share only a modest portion of the popular notoriety associated with these proposals.[25]

Sam Houston's successful campaign for the Texas governorship on an anti-slave trade platform discouraged Southern politicians of the extremist variety, for that state

[24] *Id.*, "Missionary Failure," *ibid.*, XXVII (1859), 382–87.

[25] See, for example, the Congressional speech of Henry Wilson, *Cong. Globe*, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. IV, 3101.

had been counted upon as a leading supporter of the new movement.[26] Another ominous warning came in 1858 with the defeat of Governor Adams of South Carolina, arch proponent of the African slave trade, for the Senate.[27] Rhett's Charleston *Mercury,* although praising Spratt's personal abilities, denied that this issue could be considered a test of orthodoxy for a state rights man.[28] Even in the house of its friends the slave trade scheme was assailed. During the debates of the Alabama State Convention of 1860 Yancey, nominally a member of De Bow's African Supply Association, revealed his uncompromising opposition to actual slave importations. He asserted:

> There [was] never a public opinion favorable to the African slave trade in the South, but some good men, seeing no hope of preserving their rights in competition with the organized rush of Europeans to the common domain, otherwise, had advised the trade. . . . The Confederacy [will] need no additions to its slaves from fresh importations. . . . [I] would be glad to assure the border States of perfect freedom from African competition in the slave market.[29]

The Confederate Constitution explicitly forbade the African slave trade in a provision that appears to have gone unchallenged by the convention. Only Spratt, father of the forlorn revival idea, took issue with this action of the Confederacy and continued to foster his project, hinting darkly that "*to this end another revolution may be necessary.* It is to be apprehended that this contest between democracy and slavery is not yet over." [30] But even before Appomattox the South itself had given the *coup de grâce* to the troublesome issue of the African slave trade.

[26] Eli S. Shorter to A. W. Starke, August 29, 1859, in Charleston *Mercury,* September 24, 1859.

[27] *Ibid.,* December 8, 1858. [28] *Ibid.,* December 7, 1858.

[29] John W. Dubose, *Life and Times of William Lowndes Yancey* (Birmingham, Ala., 1892), 570.

[30] L. W. Spratt, "The Slave Trade in the Southern Congress," in *Southern Literary Messenger,* XXXIII (1861), 105–13, 409–20.

Chapter XVI

WRITING FOR DE BOW

"WHAT the author of 'Cannibals All' writes and sends us," explained De Bow to his readers in 1859, "we publish without hesitation, knowing him to be a bold, fearless, ingenuous [*sic*], learned, though somewhat eccentric writer." The differences between Fitzhugh and himself, he admitted, were not few.[1] The Virginian could afford to accept this qualification good-humoredly, for the *Review* had now, after his Washington fiasco, become the central focus of his energies. De Bow's indulgence encouraged him to invade every field imaginable: literary and historical criticism, politics, lexicography, legal theory, as well as proslavery polemics. Everything was written from what Fitzhugh described as a Southern point of view, with immediate applications to the slavery issue. John Brown's assault on Harpers Ferry and the endorsement by antislavery congressmen of Hinton R. Helper's *Impending Crisis* gave additional point to the proslavery argument. Fitzhugh continued to preach the gospel of an integrated Southern thought which drew to him a steady stream of converts from his section, some of them in high places.

Perhaps his most remarkable essay of this period was on legal theory, "Law Reports—Multiplicity of Law Books." Just as his slavery theory represented an attempt to find a broad historic and sociological basis for human bondage, so his legal theory came close to the realism of a later school of

1 George Fitzhugh, "Uniform Postage, Railroads, Telegraphs, Fashions, etc.," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVI (1859), 657.

"sociological jurisprudence." As a lawyer—albeit an unsuccessful one—his profession interested him in its speculative, rather than remunerative, aspects. Here again, as in the field of slavery theory, he introduced Aristotle's organic idea of human institutions, regarding law as of "natural origin, growth, and accretion." Using this dynamic viewpoint he observed:

> Law is like language, it is constantly modifying and changing. Neither lexicographers, nor grammarians, critics, commentators, legislators, or judges, can arrest the ever-varying course of either. They will, none of them, submit to be fixed and stereotyped by a Justinian or an Alfred, by a Dr. Johnson, a Webster, a Blair, or a Lindley Murray.

Humorously, yet sympathetically, he viewed the efforts of those in history who had attempted to make laws to fit all times and all cases. He admired this illusion and faith for its intrinsic worth. Parenthetically—and paradoxically—he remarked, "Illusions are the substance and reality of life, and to banish these when innocent, is suicidal folly—the folly of over-wisdom." Strong faith seemed to him the noblest of virtues because it furnished the only incentive to lofty self-sacrifice. "It matters little what the faith is about," he added. For those Solons and Justiniáns who envisaged an eternal human law, he offered this formula, interesting for its sociological insight into primitive and ancient law:

> When you have done your works give them the sanction of religion. Consult the goddess Egeria, or retire to foreign lands, and make your people swear never to change your laws until you return. Well-directed superstition is the best prop and stay of law and government. If you can't get the fiat and imprimatur of a god, get, at least, the perpetual edict of an emperor. Pronounce your work *Good,* and to make it perfect and immortal let no commentaries be written on it, for Justinian, when he had finished his Digest, truly declared that "the contradictions of expositors had disturbed the whole body of the ancient law."

If one could only stop and stereotype human affairs, if the world would stand still, a single legal digest would answer for all time.

The question as to who actually made the laws, since they were so ever-changing, seemed to him to involve another query, "Are men and society itself mere puppets, or automata moved by extraneous forces?" To avoid the appearance of giving sanction to a materialistic and deterministic philosophy, Fitzhugh offered this explanation of free will: "Consciousness, intuition, involuntary belief, convince us of our free agency, and we all, from the necessity of our natures, act upon the conviction. Reason cannot reconcile the belief in Providence, or a First Cause, with human free agency." Actually he seemed to accept a form of environmental determinism which was the dominant intellectual fashion of the nineteenth century. His answer, therefore, as to who made the laws was that these were the direct products of contemporary forces, rather than an immutable theoretical result of the dicta of Bracton or Coke, great legal authorities of a vanished day.

Just as usage constituted the only grammar, spelling book, and dictionary, so, he declared, fashion dictated the law. To keep up with the times and the fashions, lawyers and judges filled a hundred volumes annually with new "judicial legislation." In his characteristic sweeping manner he denied that legislatures had much to do with law making; the entire burden, he believed, fell on the judges. After all, "contemporaneous exposition is best," said the law maxim. The theory that judges merely discovered and expounded the law seemed to him pure mythology—a realistic conclusion. He pointed out:

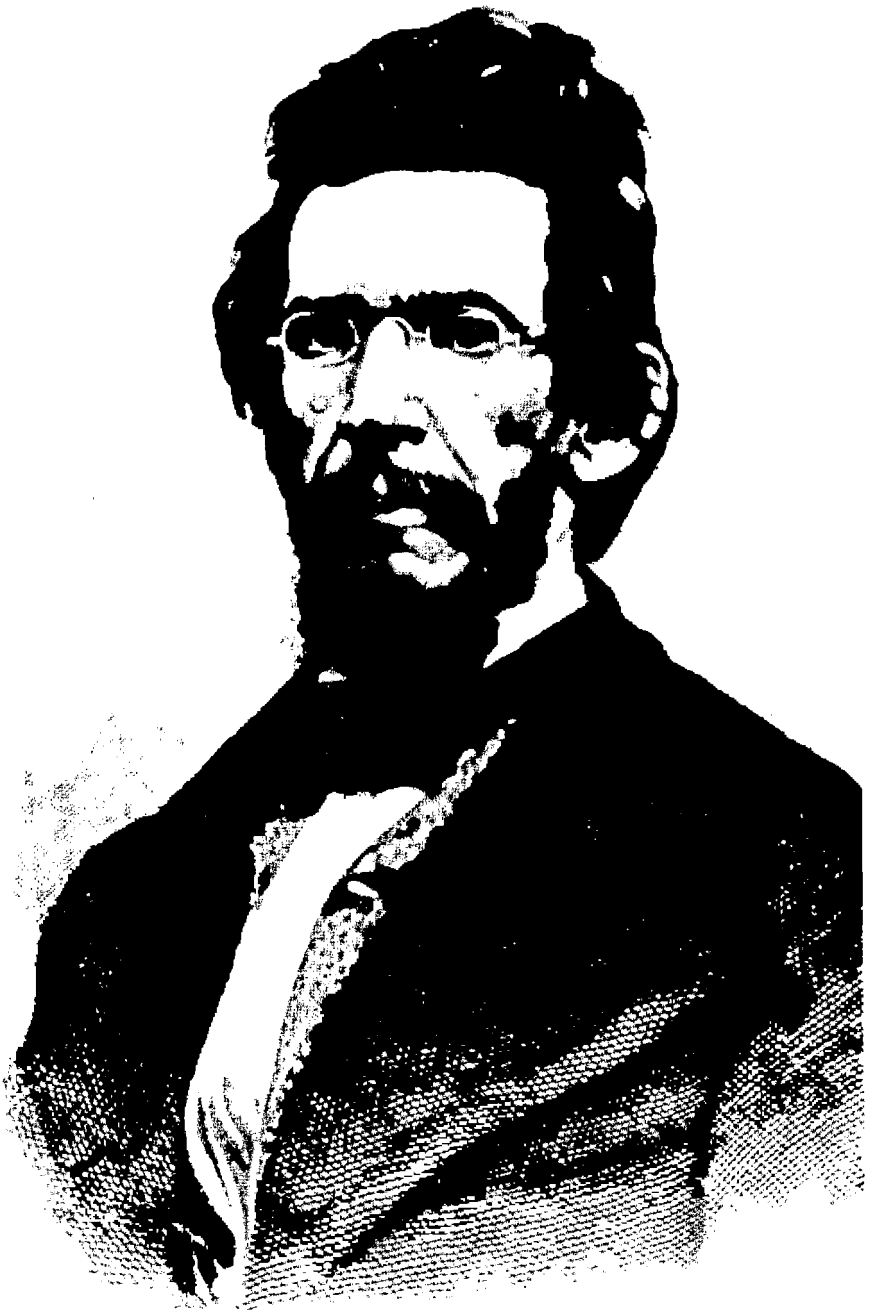
. . . the opinion of an ignorant pettifogger, freshly promoted by universal suffrage from the bar of a county court to the bench of a supreme court, is trusted as the infallible oracle of justice and truthful exponent of the common law, of that com-

mon law which the judges tell us was once statute law, but that the statutes have been lost. How comes it that Bracton, and Fleta, and Littleton, and Coke, could never find those statutes, and that our pettifogger noses them up in an instant?

"The judges make law," asserted Fitzhugh flatly, "and do not merely discover, expound and declare it." The other theory was false and absurd. Law was always made through judicial legislation, and the law student would be spared a world of hopeless investigation if he were told at the outset that common law was the creation of judges and "only to be found in full authority and purity in the latest reporter." Yet, Fitzhugh was no great admirer of too much judicial legislation. Before writing this article he had considered favorably a proposal that all law reporting cease in order to confine courts to the cases before them, thus leaving lawmaking to the legislatures. After some study, however, he had concluded that the prevailing system, if supplemented with occasional codification, was best. Possibly, he thought, a good general index to the laws might reduce the necessity of extensive law reporting; at any rate he hoped for some moratorium on those endless volumes which perpetuated the law making influence of the judge.

"Lord Coke and Lord Kenyon," he remarked, "were legal bigots. They read law, they studied law, they thought law—law in its narrowest and most artificial and technical sense. They did not comprehend law, but were comprehended by the law." Still, he felt, these men were useful, for their *stare decisis* doctrines promoted certainty in law. Reverting to his strong conservative bias, Fitzhugh declared that "the progressive, innovating spirit" of men like Lord Bacon and Mansfield, while occasionally useful, was always dangerous. Bacons and Mansfields often proceeded too rapidly with reforms, considering the naturally slow growth of society. It was well, he concluded, that there were few who comprehended the law, and "thousands of pettifoggers who are comprehended by it." [2]

[2] *Id.*, "Law Reports—Multiplicity of Law Books," *ibid.*, XXVII (1859), 76.



J. D. B. DE BOW: Editor of *De Bow's Review*

ENGRAVING IN THE *Review* OF JUNE, 1867

To an anonymous critic, "Athenian," in *De Bow's Review,* the Virginian offered certain interesting corollaries of his legal theories. Laws, he wrote, would become more numerous, complex, and rigid, as population became more dense, the means of subsistence scarce, and the temptations to crime more numerous. "The tenure of office and the tenure of property must be rendered more stable and permanent, as society goes through the natural processes of subsidence and stratification." In older countries social relations become "fixed, classified, and hereditary," a situation which would be a curse to a new country.[3]

His theory of language bore his own unmistakable modifications. When the Yankee teachers of Port Royal had insisted that his children "get dictionary by heart," he protested, declaring that he had never owned a dictionary and never looked into one ten times in his life. These arguments were met by the assertion that Fitzhugh's children must do as others did.[4] In various articles the Virginian denounced grammars and dictionaries as representing vain attempts to stereotype a living language. "Grammarians and lexicographers," he wrote, "should chiefly confine their attention to dead languages, for then their work need not be done over again in each successive age. Dissect and anatomize the dead, but let the living alone." Nature was as full of variety and change as it was of rule and order. Apparently influenced by Rousseau's ideals of natural education he observed:

Nature is the great grammarian. Order, rule, subordination of parts, are observable in all her works, whether material or intellectual. The child instinctively, intuitively, by "spontaneous apperception," learns the meaning of words, the inflections, connections, dependence, and power of words. He becomes linguist, grammarian, and rhetorician, naturally and by necessity. . . . Good associations and good books are the food for the mind—Nature will do the rest.

[3] *Id.,* "Our Athenian Friend," *ibid.,* XXIX (1860), 87.
[4] *Id.,* "Greece and England," *ibid.,* 489.

A child of six, he argued, spoke with more purity of diction and idiom, more expression, and more grammatical correctness than any professor in America could speak Latin. The reason for the latter's deficiency was that he vainly attempted to learn Latin from grammars, dictionaries, and rhetorical treatises. Fitzhugh, who was proud of his own Latin knowledge, recommended that those desiring to learn this language must read daily in the Latin classics without the use of dictionary or grammar, relying on the context for the meaning of new words. These pedagogical principles would be regarded as sound today by progressive educators.

"Dialects and provincialisms, the language of the vulgar," he wrote, "are the only accurate and poetical language." He praised the Greeks for their wisdom in cultivating, rather than discouraging, dialects. "Lindley Murray and Dictionary Webster would compel even Southerners to talk Cockney, although there be no words in Cockney vocabulary to describe accurately our institutions, our habits, customs, religious, political, or social relations." To his program for a nationalist Southern culture he added the recommendation that the South must gradually adopt a language or dialect of its own.[5]

His ideal of secondary education—evidently realized by his sons who attended near-by Rappahannock Academy—was a public day school which permitted children to spend their evenings within the family circle. The morality of the boarding school seemed less pure and refined than that afforded by the home. "Boarding schools," he said, "are levelling institutions, whose associations injure the very moral and intelligent children, and benefit the immoral, dull, and ignorant." Speaking of his youth, he told of a teacher in an academy who taught little else than grammar, geography, and arithmetic, leaving everything to be committed to memory and "nothing understood." This, Fitzhugh insisted, was actually the very best discipline for the

[5] *Id.* to De Bow, "Editorial Miscellany," *ibid.*, XXVII (1859), 369.

mind and these students rose to become successful business and professional men. Judicious whippings were part of this admirable system. "That schoolmaster," he concluded, "understood the whole practice and philosophy of teaching." [6] The Virginian lived in an era when much of the prevailing school curriculum and pedagogy could scarcely be justified on any other ground than a vague assurance as to general "disciplinary value."

There was a strong Spartan tinge in his oft expressed belief that flogging was an indispensable educational institution whether employed in the army, the navy, the school, the home, or on the plantation. In a brutal statement, which must be weighed alongside his well-established opposition in practice to Negro mistreatment as well as his own kindly nature, he declared in unqualified terms:

> Corporal punishment is the only punishment which man can inflict on his fellow-man, and flogging is, in most cases, the mildest, most expeditious and efficacious mode of corporal punishment—it is an old and world-wide institution, founded on universal experience, and approved by all authority, human and divine. Moral suasion is a fallacy, a delusion, a humbug, except when it is the threat and usual precursor of physical punishment.[7]

He gave an enthusiastic endorsement to De Bow's campaign, backed by prominent Southerners, to establish the University of the South as a great educational institution of a Southern nationalist character. Southerners who sent their sons to famous New England colleges were gently chided for their dearth of sectional pride. When, after John Brown's raid, a mass exodus of patriotic Southern medical students from Philadelphia to Richmond took place, Fitzhugh was deeply gratified. Emulating the enthusiasm of Governor Wise displayed on that occasion, he wrote, "The Southern medical students who lately deserted Northern

[6] *Id.,* "Home Education and Schools," *ibid.,* XXIX (1860), 719.
[7] *Id.,* "Johnson, Boswell, Goldsmith," *ibid.,* XXVIII (1860), 420.

colleges deserve immortal honor. It is time the South should educate her sons." He hoped that the new University of the South would share his objections to the study of political economy. "Slavery cannot be justified," he explained, "until political economy gets the *'coup de grâce.'*" Nor did he forget the infant science of sociology which he and his friend, Holmes, cherished so deeply. "By-the-by," he said, "a professorship of Sociology will be indispensable at this university." [8] This was a pioneer ideal, not to be realized in America for another generation at least; his conception of the science, however, was primarily the propagandistic ideal of a discipline useful to justify slavery and the Southern social order.

Not a college man, himself, he favored "careless, desultory reading" to rigid study habits, but for those who read voraciously without assimilation, he had only the contemptuous term, "intellectual dyspeptics." He deplored the tendency of the masses to read "low novels" such as those written by Dickens, Smollett, and Fielding; in fact, he even insisted that the only novel worth reading was Don Quixote, a curious preference for a Southern romanticist who loved the Middle Ages. Half of the college graduates, he declared, belonged in literary taste to the masses because of their fondness for bawdy novels and pictorial newspapers. Amusing picture magazines, intended for little children, had a way of turning up in the hands of "big children." As for the qualities of his own writings, he did not expect to be read by the masses "at any time," but wrote primarily for intelligent readers and for an appreciative posterity.[9] With his newly acquired habit of pipe smoking, which may have suggested to him a contemplative spirit, he liked to visualize himself as a self-taught, original thinker.

[8] *Id.*, "The Valleys of Virginia—The Rappahannock," *loc. cit.*, 611–29.

[9] *Id.*, "Uniform Postage, Railroads, Telegraphs, Fashions, etc.," *loc. cit.*, 657.

During 1859–1860 Fitzhugh turned literary editor for De Bow, using criteria in his book reviews which must have dismayed the aesthetic tastes of those professionally in the field of *belles-lettres*. Each author, whatever his illustrious name, was brought before the bar of judgment and closely examined as to his opinions on morals, slavery, and liberalism. Particularly successful in meeting the test of Fitzhugh's social conservatism was Samuel Johnson. Whatever ponderousness or artificiality might inhere in Johnson's classicist style, Fitzhugh felt that this was of little moment alongside the fact that the author of *Lives of the Poets* was a zealous Jacobite, hence an enemy of the fanatical Puritanical spirit shown by the English parliamentarians of the seventeenth century. Johnson's frequently intolerant judgments appeared explicable to him as a justifiable hatred of infidelity and subversive ideas. "Dr. Johnson, Burke, and the brilliant circle that revolved around them," he wrote, "were the last and greatest of the conservatives of the eighteenth century." These men, together with Sir Walter Scott, deserved to be commemorated by statues in every Southern capitol. "Thus," he said, "would our youth learn what are the sentiments and opinions that become gentlemen and cavaliers."

No superlatives were too strong for the literary abilities of Oliver Goldsmith, according to the Virginian, who praised his balanced mind, excellent taste, correct moral ideas, and knowledge of human nature. *The Vicar of Wakefield* seemed to him the best of English novels; *She Stoops to Conquer,* the best of English comedies; and *The Deserted Village,* as a social document, contained more truth than any treatise on political economy. He admired particularly Goldsmith's condemnation of "pernicious luxury" and of the effects of excessive trade. Most of all Fitzhugh declared his special indebtedness to Goldsmith's *History of Rome,* a book which had been more useful to him in his

youth than any other. After Shakespeare, Goldsmith was the greatest of English authors, said Fitzhugh.[10]

But Milton and Macaulay failed miserably to meet the standards of excellence set by the sage of Port Royal. Both, unfortunately, were representatives of the "ultra-liberal doctrines of the Puritans, Independents, and Infidels, and of the vulgar despotism of Cromwell." Against Milton his bill of particulars stressed the fact that his *Paradise Lost* was "artificial, affected, and un-English," and represented a foolish attempt to compete with the ancients. Worse still were his essays on liberty and politics which condoned regicide. The culminating charge denounced Milton's family life as "lower than the brute" because his first wife was compelled to leave him inside a month, and the last wife endured an unhappy existence with him.

Macaulay was no better. "Like Milton, his love of liberty was a mere device to pull down all above him to his own level, and to oppress all below him. The instincts of the gentleman or Christian neither ever felt for a moment in their lives." Particularly obnoxious seemed the fact that Macaulay had eulogized such men as Cromwell, Warren Hastings, Machiavelli, Robert Clive, and Caesar Borgia, while defaming William Penn. This Whig historian, according to Fitzhugh, despised the laboring classes and sought to combine the "landed and moneyed interest" to form a government of the middle class. Nevertheless, the Virginian admitted that Macaulay's work was a great storehouse of learning and, from a certain point of view, he could even be considered one of the greatest authors of his age; he was original, plausible, fascinating, but misleading.[11]

No Marxist editor, vigilantly seeking any deviation from the orthodox party line, could have performed his task of

[10] *Id.*, "Oliver Goldsmith and Doctor Johnson," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVIII (1860), 504–13.

[11] *Id.*, "Milton and Macaulay," *ibid.*, 667–79; *id.*, "Johnson, Boswell, Goldsmith," *loc. cit.*, 416.

sifting the golden grains of proletarian literature from the chaff of bourgeois writings with more finality than Fitzhugh separated conservatives and liberals. Parson Friend of Port Royal occasionally attempted to re-enforce the critic's moral judgments by even stronger ones of his own. Once, in discussing Byron's "Vision of Judgment," the minister quoted from memory long passages of the poem to prove that it was an immoral work. Fitzhugh, however, contended that it was an admirable Protestant satire, and added slyly, "We went away satisfied there was nothing so bad in it, else he could not have been so well acquainted with it." [12]

In the field of American literature Fitzhugh singled out for condemnation Bayard Taylor's *Travels in Greece and Russia,* primarily for its liberal philosophy. Taylor, then at the height of his literary career, had earned considerable praise from the contemporary press, but while he might appear "sprightly, volatile, and correct," he was nevertheless to Fitzhugh "common place, and hasty, if not superficial"—altogether a miniature Macaulay. The Virginian was annoyed by Taylor's philistine attitude towards the glory that was Greece and his flippant references to the bad hotels and railroads of that historic country. Particularly offensive was Taylor's comment that religious orthodoxy in the Near East was a millstone about the necks of its inhabitants and equally bad were his references to the numerous holidays and general idleness prevailing there. "Greece and the rest of Southern Europe," replied Fitzhugh caustically, "have not as yet adopted the high-pressure system of society, which begets paupers and millionaires, and riots in famine and starvation." Taylor's tolerance seemed to him mere indifference on sacred matters. Worst of all in the indictment against the author was the fact that he openly praised the foundling hospital at Moscow as a

[12] *Id.,* "Milton, Byron, and Southey," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIX (1860), 430–40; *id.,* "The Siege of Ismail," *ibid.,* 293–301.

solution to the problem of illegitimate children which Americans were too puritanical to face. Such foundling hospitals, wrote Fitzhugh, meant the destruction of the family; hence Taylor's praise appeared unworthy of any American gentleman.[13]

The entire field of contemporary German literature and science, which had achieved an amazing renaissance, was next to suffer the weight of Fitzhugh's censure. German liberal romanticism, with such brilliant figures as Goethe, the Schlegels, Heine, Fichte, Schiller, and others, represented a literary movement of world importance which had its counterpart in other intellectual fields. Even the Virginian was compelled to preface his criticism with certain flattering observations. Since he read no German and knew few German authors even in translation, he chose to rely upon the observations of Carlyle and Madame de Staël. Despite the sympathetic treatment accorded to the German school by these writers, Fitzhugh learned enough to convince himself that he was in the camp of the enemy. Still, he was willing to admit that German literature was the best of the age—but he entertained a low opinion of all modern literature. None had surpassed the ancients. He attributed the advancement of German culture to the growth of a national spirit, the emphasis on a national literature and local customs as contrasted to the imitation of French culture characteristic of eighteenth century Prussia. This of course had obvious implications for Southern nationalism. "Making *saur kraut* and lagerbier however cunningly," observed the Virginian, "no more constitutes national character, than producing lots of cotton, sugar, and tobacco."

Fitzhugh was not, however, to be deceived by the blandishments of German literary genius. New England had dipped too deeply into this fountain to render it anything

[13] *Id.*, "Bayard Taylor's Travels in Greece and Russia," *ibid.*, XXVII (1859), 648–56.

but suspect. As a result, he concluded, mysticism, skepticism, and immorality had become the tests of genius, originality, and respectability. The iconoclasm of the new German thought became the target of his sharp tirade:

German learning and research, and German speculation have unsettled or subverted everything: established nothing. In history, it has not established a fact, but undermined and shaken all faith in half what were hitherto believed as facts. In religion, it tried, and at one time had well-nigh succeeded in overthrowing all that is historical or miraculous in the Bible, and in leaving to its votaries nothing but a set of moral maxims and fine sentiments. In politics, its transcendental speculations have destroyed all time-honored loyalty, all faith in past experience, and begotten a presumptuous revolutionary Utopian spirit, restless under restraint, and ever anxious for change, that has made society in Europe a heaving volcano.

His indictment would not have been complete without a reference to the spirit of agrarianism and free love fostered by the dominant German culture.[14] Fitzhugh was, in fact, assailing the entire field of mid-nineteenth century materialism with its new cult of science, experimentalism, and objectivity.

Throughout Fitzhugh's critical essays his love of the Greek and Latin classics was repeatedly shown. His knowledge of Latin led him to prefer Vergil to Homer—he did not know Greek. He tried to account for the superiority of the ancient and medieval writers over modern by theorizing that prior to the invention of printing, when books were extremely costly, only the best literature could be produced. "We think that the internal evidence of great effort, labor, and painstaking which all the works of ancient art and literature evince on their face, is the chief reason of the admiration which they justly excite." As in his social science he clung to the use of natural law concepts in explaining literature:

[14] *Id.*, "German Literature," *ibid.*, XXIX (1860), 280–90.

Literature and art are of spontaneous origin and growth. Science or *rule,* applied to them, arrests their growth, and anticipates and prevents future invention and improvements—for such inventions and improvements would be a violation of accepted rules. If improvement and invention do come, they come like Gothic architecture and Shakespeare's plays, from those ignorant of the rules of ancient art.

He pointed out that as long as the classics remained the models of subsequent literature, there could never be anything better than merely good imitations.[15]

His essays revealed the sense of humor which had first attracted De Bow and the reviewers of his two books. In one of his rare outbursts of complete frankness he wrote humorously:

> While we were one day abusing the Yankees, a Scotchman remarked to us, that "he really thought the Virginians had more *tact* than any people he ever knew." Now, we do believe, in a horse trade, a Virginian would cheat a Yankee out of his eyes; but he would do it so genteelly! [16]

History was ever a favorite study of Fitzhugh's and his opinions reflected a corresponding certitude. Here his preferences were considerably in advance of the times, for he assailed the tendency of historiography to record only the abnormal and wholly exceptional. Not only did historians show an overfondness for the annals of kings, popes, statesmen, battles, heroes, and bloody usurpations, but even these subjects were distorted by a superficial emphasis on mere externals, the stage effects of greatness. He wished historians to present their characters informally—"in undress," as he put it. More Boswells who escaped the error of idealizing their subjects were needed. Social history, the "flesh and bone" of the past, seemed especially attractive to him, although one work of this type, George L. Craik's

[15] *Id.,* "Ancient and Modern Art and Literature," *ibid.,* XXVIII (1860), 80–87.

[16] *Id.,* "Oliver Goldsmith and Doctor Johnson," *loc. cit.,* 507.

monumental *Pictorial History of England,* appeared defective because it blended social and political events in an unmanageable complex unit, rather than retaining the simplicity of a separate treatment for each phase.[17]

Fitzhugh's philosophy of history is of particular significance, for much of his elaborate doctrines in almost every field rested on the basic assumption that the history of human institutions was an infallible guide to what was normal and universal among these, hence establishing the true conservative position. His belief in the natural origins and development of society left little room for catastrophic factors or the determining influence of great men upon history. He declared with finality, "Great men are the results of the times; they do not much affect the course of events." Here he took sharp issue with his idol, Carlyle, the archproponent of the "great man theory." In reviewing Carlyle's biography of Frederick the Great, Fitzhugh seized the opportunity for an assault on the author's idea of historical causation:

> We don't believe in a simple government, like Zekiel Bigelow's churn, with one wheel and a crank. We don't believe that Frederick William ruled and made Prussia great merely with a "walking cane" for sceptre, and "Tobacco Parliament" for council. Nay, we believe that Prussia, Prussian drill made him, not he Prussia—and that the unspoken instincts and inarticulate voice of the people controlled him, while he seemed to control them.[18]

However reduced a role Fitzhugh might attribute to dominant personalities in history, he shared much of Carlyle's hero worship and admiration of powerful individuals who governed nations with a dictatorial hand. He was convinced of the claims of Frederick the Great upon posterity,

[17] *Id.,* "Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia," in *De Bow's Review,* XXVI (1859), 121–24.

[18] *Id.,* "Frederick the Great, by Thomas Carlyle," *ibid.,* XXIX (1860), 152–53.

but, on the other hand, he condemned Cromwell and Napoleon. Cromwell appeared to him "a great brute," an excretion of Calvinist fanaticism and despotism. "History will show," wrote Fitzhugh of Cromwell's Calvinist ideas, "that Geneva was the birthplace of modern *isms,* modern infidelity, anarchy, and military despotism." The inference for New England's Puritan past was, of course, intentional. It was also apparent that his dislike for Napoleon was not so much due to his wholesale bloodletting, but primarily because the famous Corsican had been the propagandistic instrument for spreading the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment throughout Western civilization.

Elsewhere Fitzhugh was generous in his praise of the tyrants of ancient and modern times. "Men," he declared, "prefer tyranny and good social order, to liberty and anarchy." On this ground he justified such leaders as Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar, the Plantagenets, Henry VIII, the Stuarts, and the Bourbons. Personally, Fitzhugh preferred hereditary rule to "usurped military rule," because order, subordination, and security were best served by traditional institutions which society was accustomed to venerate and obey. "Anarchy is not tolerable for a day," he wrote regarding the occasional necessity for despotisms, "and the liberals who invoked it, frightened at its approach, are ready and anxious to call in the bloody hand of self-elected despotism to exorcise the demon they have raised." The tyrant who brought order and security to property and persons was always popular in history.

Government was best served by divine right claims or their equivalents. "Queen Victoria," he said, "is a sham, a phantasm, yet because she is the incumbent of an old and venerated institution, the throne of England, her government is wiser and milder, and yet more powerful and efficient, than that of any military usurper that ever lived." In a broad sense all stable institutional government, he implied, was based on the equivalent of divine right no-

tions. "Our titles to our properties are as good as those of kings to their thrones. As good but no better. Let us beware how we run a tilt against hereditary monarchy, for we are hereditary monarchs ourselves." Still Fitzhugh did not care to be considered as an uncompromising monarchist at heart. Circumstances, he admitted, sometimes made elective republican government natural and best, but hereditary monarchy was historically the most natural and common form of government. The planters' regime of the South, he asserted, was based on divine right principles. Fitzhugh expressed his traditionalistic position in a sharp criticism of Carlyle:

> Carlyle is a man of genius, but he is reckless, rash, bold, original, affected, and half-ideal. He is right in saying "the world is too little governed"; wrong in repudiating institutions, forms, ceremonies, or "phantasms," as he calls them, and relying on the government of mere force and the naked sword.[19]

He admitted the justice of Carlyle's criticism of parliamentarianism, but insisted that however unreasonable congresses and councils might appear to be in theory, they were justified by the fact that they operated well in practice. The Virginian admired the workings of the Southern legislatures, particularly that of his own state with its provision in times of crisis, like the John Brown raid, for such a strong executive as Governor Wise. But what he actually believed in was the sixteenth century ideal of a parliamentary body; its function was merely to advise the executive regarding the state of the nation and to petition for redress of grievances. Parliamentarians were too numerous to govern effectively—one might as well set the crew to direct a ship.[20]

Liberal history books, as one would expect, received short shrift from Fitzhugh. He wrote a scorching review of George Bancroft's popular history of the United States

[19] *Id.*, "Bonaparte, Cromwell, and Washington," *ibid.*, XXVIII (1860), 139–54.

[20] *Id.*, "Popular Institutions," *ibid.*, 526–29.

for its liberal idea of progress, and its subversive "inner light" doctrines. Despite his admiration for Bancroft's erudition, taste, and industry, he insisted that a totally different kind of history work was necessary. "We want an historian," he said, "who shall show that the serfs of Europe, in the days of Cressy [*sic*], Agincourt, and Poictiers, were brave, wholesouled men who had homes, position, and place, in the world, but that now, the hireling class, the majority of mankind, have neither masters, nor homes, nor certain means of support." [21]

His most original observations were made in his essays on Virginia genealogy, a branch of history with important social implications. He produced numerous careful essays on the social history of tidewater Virginia with emphasis upon the historic FFV's—the First Families of Virginia—which had emigrated to its shores from England. Modern historians are still indebted, in large part, to Fitzhugh's documentary research for the history of the Rappahannock Valley. De Bow wrote indulgently of his contributor's chief hobby, "With him we agree that it ought to be no discredit to a man to have had a grandfather." [22]

Fitzhugh found many arguments in favor of genealogical studies, most of which were an outgrowth of his nationalist proslavery philosophy. He was particularly impressed by the fact that genealogy was a major prop of a conservative community. " 'The son of nobody,' " he wrote, "belongs to no place or country. Men whose kin and ancestry for hundreds of years have resided in the same section, love their country and may be relied on in times of difficulty." Family pride was therefore an adjunct of patriotism and could be best fostered by genealogical research. Fitzhugh was aware of the sociological significance of ancestor worship as a stabilizing force in society, however disguised a form it might

[21] *Id.*, "Mr. Bancroft's History and the Inner Light," *ibid.*, XXIX (1860), 598–613.

[22] *Id.*, "Ancient Families of Virginia, Maryland, etc.," *ibid.*, XXVI (1859), 486.

take. A family tradition of solidarity acted as a spur to lofty conduct. The Scotch practice of preserving family histories carefully appeared commendable for its contribution to the warmth and sanctity of the hearth. And genealogy need not necessarily be a product of egotistic feeling. "To acknowledge our kin," he declared humorously, "is as often the exercise of humility as the gratification of pride." [23]

Southern nationalist as he was, Fitzhugh did not overlook the benefits of genealogy for a crystallizing confederacy of planters and their supporters. He wrote of Bishop Meade's *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia,* "May many such books as our author's be written, to show that we of the South are one people in blood, in sentiment, in thought, in social organization, and in political interests and institutions." [24] A common consciousness of family solidarity fostered in this fashion should unite the older South Atlantic states with their offspring of the Southwest.

Hand in hand with this ideal of genealogy went Fitzhugh's exaltation of race, an extension of his doctrines of family solidarity. He explained:

> We talk a great deal about race in the South. Race certainly erects a far wider distinction and broader difference amongst men than mere family among men of the same race, and therefore deserves much more attention and consideration. But there is a great inequality and difference between stock, or families of the same race. The blood or breed of men, both physically and morally, deserves as much attention as the blood of cattle, horses, hogs, or poultry.[25]

He thought the repeated intermarriage of old Virginia families as beneficial a process as the equivalent barnyard inbreeding of superior species. Into his language crept the

[23] *Id.*, "Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia," *loc. cit.*, 123–24.

[24] *Ibid.*, 124.

[25] *Id.*, "Family History and the Philosophy of Names," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIX (1860), 257–69.

challenging phrase "master race," which soon came to mean considerably more than the ordinary master-slave relationship. On the eve of the Civil War he wrote:

> Our seceding States best understand and practice the art of government. . . . A master race necessarily improves upon itself, and practices as severe a drill as it subjects its inferiors to. . . . The gentlemen of the South are better horsemen, better marksmen, have more physical strength and activity, and can endure more fatigue than their slaves. Besides, they have the lofty sentiments and high morals of a master race, that would render them unconquerable.[26]

The planter, accustomed to command, possessed the fighting qualities of a master race, whose superiority the Yankee could overlook only at his peril. This ideal of race was to be developed still further by Fitzhugh into a militant creed.

[26] *Id.*, "Frederick the Great, by Thomas Carlyle," *loc. cit.*, 155.

Chapter XVII

FANNING THE FLAMES

IN the spring of 1860 Fitzhugh planned a lecture tour of the South to bring his aggressive proslavery doctrines before large urban audiences. The Young Men's Literary Society of Fredericksburg had extended an invitation to him for a series of lectures in that city. Fitzhugh had not delivered a public lecture since his New Haven experience, but he could look forward to much of the same intellectual spirit of the lyceum in the Fredericksburg literary society as in New England. His arrival was preceded by considerable publicity in the *News*.[1]

On March 15 he spoke on the subject, "Make Home Attractive," in a partially filled auditorium, a disheartening response attributed to inclement weather. Nevertheless, according to the local press, he proved so instructive and entertaining that success was freely predicted for his later lectures. The discussion evolved the familiar antiabolitionist theories he had propounded in his various publications. He pleaded for a more diversified Southern economic life along nationalist lines and deplored the planter's tendency of "making cotton to buy negroes to make cotton to buy negroes again." This nationalist argument possessed considerable timeliness in an atmosphere where secession was looked upon as an increasing probability. Fitzhugh warned his audience:

The South must soon have to take care of itself. The federal government was a mere league between small nations, to give

1 Fredericksburg *News*, March 13, 1860.

them ability to cope with stronger nations. Like all such leagues, it lasts so long as there is a common danger, an outside pressure, and from habit, a little while longer. It is not a government, because it has neither a people nor a territory.[2]

The second lecture, "Horace Greeley and His Lost Book," was enthusiastically heralded by the Fredericksburg *News:*

Those who wish to hear the profoundest problems of industrial and social economy discussed with a masterly power and treated with a force of reasoning and richness of illustration commanded by no thinker on the Southern platform now before the public, will do well to attend tonight.[3]

Fitzhugh attempted in his discussion of Greeley to prove that the editor of the New York *Tribune* was the American pioneer of those subversive socialist ideas now stirring the nation and hence he was the "dictatorial leader" of Black Republicanism. The *Tribune* as the "most widely circulated and influential paper in the world," actually formed, directed, and controlled public opinion. The "lost book" reference meant the controversial series of newspaper articles regarding Fourier and socialism published in 1846 by Greeley and Henry J. Raymond, editor of the New York *Courier.* Particularly interesting was Fitzhugh's admission that Greeley's assertions of 1846 had been the starting point for his own investigations. The *Tribune* editor had then written of the Hungry Forties: "We have the confessions of the best thinkers and ablest journals in the Old World, that the old order of things has proved a *Failure*—that new principles must be invoked, and new and profounder remedies for social evils be resorted to." From this statement had originated the Virginian's dictum that "free society was a failure."

"This Lost Book of Mr. Greel[e]y's," wrote Fitzhugh

[2] Fitzhugh, "Make Home Attractive," *loc. cit.,* 635.
[3] Fredericksburg *News,* March 16, 20, 1860.

a few months later, "may be found in condensed and correct form in that Fire-Ship, the Chicago Platform. Its Homestead Bill, and the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence, cover the whole agrarian, communistic, free-love, anarchical and leveling doctrines of Mr. Greeley, and of Fourier, from whom he borrows." [4] He cited at length Greeley's condemnation of concentrated wealth, exploitative capital, and the increasing monopoly of the soil by the well-to-do. The New York editor had concluded with an appeal for the principle of "association," along the lines suggested by Fourier, insisting that the social evils of the day required radical reform.

The lecturer took pride in mentioning the latest disciple to his theory that free society had failed, Samuel Nott of Massachusetts, author of *Slavery and the Remedy.* Fitzhugh praised Nott's "law of mutual interdependence" which not only conceded the great benefits of medieval serfdom but also reviled the nineteenth century for its extreme exploitation of the laboring masses.[5] The fact that Nott denounced slavery as an evil to master and slave was not mentioned. Nott's position was actually a moderate one, suggesting Lincoln's own distress over the choice of a proper course of action in dealing with slavery.[6]

Fitzhugh pointed out another Northern convert to the slavery cause, President Nathan Lord of Dartmouth, whose proslavery sentiments expressed in a well-publicized open letter to one of his former Southern students had recently attracted national attention. President Lord was a Congregational minister who believed in the divine nature of slavery, a position which was to cost him the respected post he had held at Dartmouth since 1828. On the occa-

[4] George Fitzhugh, "Horace Greeley and His Lost Book," in *Southern Literary Messenger,* XXXI (1860), 213.

[5] Fredericksburg *News,* March 23, 1860. For Fitzhugh's extended discussion of Nott, see his "Samuel Nott of Massachusetts on European Experiments with Serfdom," in *De Bow's Review,* XXVII (1859), 29–36.

[6] Samuel Nott, *Slavery and the Remedy* (New York, 1857), *passim.*

sion of John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry, the clergyman had attempted to represent the North as condemning this act and predicted that within two or three generations the North might be compelled to adopt slavery for white laborers.[7] By that time, observed Fitzhugh, Northern workers would be too abundant for anyone to buy them for support. The free labor market was already overstocked and Europe now sought to dispose of her "human cattle" on American shores.

He asserted, "The great problem of European revolutionists is how to provide for the unenslaved masses by enslaving them again; what new chains to impose in order to secure the well-being of the people!" Mere names such as freedom and liberty did nothing to make "modern devices" of control anything else but slavery. "Under the plausible names of fraternity, equality, socialism, what is called for but regulation, restriction, direction, bonds, in regard to labor, time, place, capital, property, hitherto too free?" he asked.[8]

The *News* once more hailed Fitzhugh's lecture with an editorial laden with superlatives:

> His discourse was a concise, luminous, and conclusive vindication of the wisdom, beneficence, and conservative character of slavery as an institution, whilst by the light of his strong intellect, the utter falsity and certain failure of free society were exhibited standing out in bold relief against the dark background of the future.
>
> Mr. Fitzhugh's doctrines are altogether original, and evidently the result of profound thought and the most laborious study. He is no wrangling politician, or professed statesman answering argument by abuse, but the founder of a new philosophy, which entitles him to stand among the public men of the present day as Aristotle stood among the ancients. And when our representatives shall have become thoroughly imbued with his teach-

[7] Boston *Liberator*, February 10, 1860.
[8] Fredericksburg *News*, March 23, 1860.

ings, then and not till then, can they fortify to impregnability their position on the vexed question of human slavery.[9]

Meanwhile, the Virginian was attracting increased attention in Congress. Eli Thayer, Massachusetts representative in the House during 1857–1861, who frequently read Fitzhugh's writings on slavery, was observing carefully the latter's discussion of Thayer's project for organizing Northern emigration to western Virginia. Despite Southern antagonism stirred up by his emigration activities in behalf of the antislavery cause in Kansas, Thayer had organized the Homestead Emigration Society in 1857 to buy up Virginia lands for free labor colonies and thus achieve abolitionism by a process of infiltration. Virginia tidewater newspapers expressed angry sentiments. The Richmond *South* insisted that this disguised crusade against slavery—Thayer said it was a bona fide business venture —be expelled from the soil of the state. The *Virginia South Side Democrat* and the Richmond *Enquirer* both incited to violence the residents of Accomac, Dinwiddie, and Southampton counties—Thayer's proposed area of colonization—against the "threatened visitants from the Yankeedom." [10]

Despite the fact that Thayer's project had received the active collaboration of such men as Sumner and Greeley, Fitzhugh professed to believe at first that it was primarily a money-making scheme. He compared this "planting of capital" in advance of population to the large slaveowner's trek to the West. "The owner of a hundred slaves," he wrote in *De Bow's Review,* "who with his overseer moves to the West, carries out a self-supporting, self-insuring, well organized community." However, he warned that should the Thayer plan turn out to be a scheme to expel the people and property of one section of the Union from a common territory, it would not only cease to be profit-

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Newspapers quoted in Boston *Liberator,* April 17, 24, 1857.

able, but would beget sectional hate and civil war. But the South must receive in compensation the reopening of the African slave trade. "Increase the number of slaves, and of slavery, and of slave States," he said, "and then 'Organized Emigration' is a good plot—'an excellent plot.' " Failure to avoid the exclusive appropriation of the territories by the North would mean inevitable disunion. But, he added, he would like the plot of Sumner and Thayer better if they would dispense with common schools, rifles, and the right of suffrage. These things were not useful or necessary for common laborers and tended to breed idleness, discontent, and in time, insurrection, anarchy, and agrarianism.

The basic aims of North and South, he declared, were the same. Both were interested in one or another form of the slave trade. "Money-making, the acquisition of property, we are all equally intent on," he said, "and there is no other property except property in man—(or property in human labor which is the same thing)—for property has value, and value is but the result of human labor, past or prospective." Slavery died out at the North because it was unprofitable, and therefore unnatural; but it remained profitable and hence natural at the South. "People 'should not quarrel with their bread and butter,' " he warned. Each section needed the other.[11]

In this article, "The White Slave Trade," Fitzhugh spoke of the "prudent conservatism" of the Buchanan administration which he hoped would eventually heal sectional disunion and added that there were indications of early favorable results. De Bow, however, could not forbear a cynical comment, "With equal faith in the Administration, we do not see those encouraging signs in other quarters which are vouchsafed to the vision of our

[11] George Fitzhugh, "The White Slave Trade," in *De Bow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 269–74.

contributor, and we regard with instinctive repugnance, these Yankee colonization schemes, whatever politico-economically they may seem." [12]

Thayer was overjoyed to receive Fitzhugh's approval, however qualified, for his Virginia colonization plan. In Congress, on March 25, 1858, he cited a portion of this article in *De Bow's Review,* which, he pointed out, was "everywhere acknowledged to be good Southern authority." He had previously maintained the argument that just as all slaveholders united themselves by a bond of interest and sympathy and organized proslavery acts to extend the peculiar institution, so it was necessary for lovers of freedom to organize emigration similarly. Fitzhugh's article proved the justice of his observations. "Then what fault," asked Thayer, "can be found with our efforts to organize Freedom by means of our emigrant aid societies, that enable our citizens to go to the territories in companies of twenty, fifty, one hundred, or two hundred, to take possession of the West, and to locate there the institutions under which they choose to live?" [13]

Fitzhugh, after reading Thayer's speech, attempted to escape the full onus of being classed as the defender of a project commonly considered abolitionist. Ironically, he admitted his admiration for this new system:

> Mr. Thayer has immortalized himself by this grand discovery in sociological and politico-economical science—yes, Mr. Thayer is right—*buy land and bait it;* and white slaves will settle on it as thick as flies on carrion. . . . Sentimental abolitionism is well nigh dead, but in its place has succeeded abolition of a far more virulent character. It proposes to expel negro slaveholders and negro slaves, because white labor is cheaper than

[12] *Ibid.,* 274n.

[13] *Six Speeches with a Sketch of the Life of Hon. Eli Thayer* (Boston, 1860), 21. The Congressional record of this speech is abridged, possibly by arrangement with the House reporter. *Cong. Globe,* 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, 1339–43.

black—because its supply is inexhaustible, and because it more rapidly settles the lands of speculators, and enhances their price.[14]

Thayer proceeded to realize his plan despite Virginia's threats, insisting that he expected to obtain a profit. "We shall not be intimidated," he wrote jocosely to the New York *Herald*. "We are not that kind of people when good dividends are at stake." Part of his original western Virginia tract was to be sold to Northern settlers at prevailing prices, another part at one fourth cost, and the remainder was to be given away. He expected such rapid appreciation of the value of these once-exhausted lands that all slaveholders would learn how unprofitable slave labor actually was.[15] The plan, ultimately extended to eastern Kentucky as well as Virginia, was enthusiastically supported by abolitionists; two hours after the stock of Thayer's company was put on sale in New York, subscribers took the entire amount.[16] The results, however, were far less sensational than friends or enemies expected and the political aspects of colonization were soon submerged by economic problems.

In 1860, after the John Brown affair showed that Thayer had—unwittingly—given arms to old Brown, Fitzhugh no longer troubled to cover his opposition to "Ceredo"—Thayer's Virginia colony—by bantering remarks. He denounced the disguise of innocent farmer assumed by the Massachusetts abolitionist as familiar Trojan horse tactics. "Unless we can arrest this white slave trade of Mr. Thayer," he wrote, "the border States will become the property of New-England." [17] But Thayer was now safely

[14] George Fitzhugh, "Public Lands of Rome and America," in *De Bow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 430.

[15] Boston *Liberator*, April 24, 1857.

[16] Abel Stevens, "American Slavery—Its Progress and Prospects," in *Methodist Quarterly Review*, XXXIX (1857), 437–64.

[17] George Fitzhugh, "Disunion within the Union," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVIII (1860), 1–7.

established amidst the sympathetic folk of western Virginia and at least twelve newspapers of that section gave him their support.

On another occasion during 1859–1860, after Seward's irrepressible conflict speech at Rochester of October 25, 1858, Thayer and other congressmen invoked the name of Fitzhugh during debate. The colonizationist satirized Seward's "harmless speculations" regarding free and slave labor and compared them to Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South.*[18] Far more significant were the arguments in the House regarding the origin of the irrepressible conflict idea, now attacked by Southern members as an incendiary phrase. Republican members pointed out that the original statement of this idea had been made by the Richmond *Enquirer* of May 6, 1856, and that its editor, Roger A. Pryor, now a member of the House, was leading the attack on Seward.

Pryor denied authorship of that editorial, insisting that no man in the South ever adopted the notion held by the New York senator of an inherent and inevitable conflict between North and South. He expressed his resentment against the belief that the spirits of Ormuzd and Ahriman, light and darkness, good and evil, were opposed here in an antagonism which must go on until one or the other principle was vanquished. The *Enquirer* editorial meant, he believed, that the irrepressible conflict was between the Constitution, the rights of the South, and the interests of the Union on the one hand, and the principles and purposes of the Black Republican party on the other.[19] That Pryor himself misunderstood or misrepresented Fitzhugh's editorial of May 6 is clear from the previous analysis of that article. Fitzhugh had in mind the theory that some form of slavery had always existed in history and that free society was but an innovation beginning with the

[18] *Cong. Globe,* 35 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, 236–37.
[19] *Ibid.,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 284–85.

abolition of serfdom, which must ultimately give way to the normal social relationship of master and servant.

Pryor's chief opponent was John F. Farnsworth of Chicago, an abolitionist representative who had already distinguished himself for his inquiry into violations of the slave trade provision of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty and for a resolution satirizing Buchanan's proposal to annex Cuba. He was determined now to give Pryor no quarter and for this purpose he quoted extensively from the files of the *Enquirer*—actually citing Fitzhugh's work almost exclusively. Among these editorials were the frequent observations of the latter on the failure of free society and of the inhumanity of extending its evils to the coming generations.[20]

Not only Fitzhugh's ideas, but Fitzhugh himself, received senatorial censure from the Republicans in January, 1860, on the occasion of Buchanan's message. Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin, prominent Republican who had become convinced that it was impossible to appease the slave states, rose to denounce what he considered a revolution of opinion in the South on the subject of slavery. He asserted to the Southern members:

> You have not until within the last few years assumed the doctrine that the natural and normal condition of the laboring man is that of a slave. It is within the last few years that this doctrine has been promulgated at the South, and I grant that it has made and is making most rapid strides. It reaches your schools and it reaches your churches and it reaches your public journals.

This was sharply denied by Senator James Chesnut of South Carolina, who declared, "The position is that the normal condition of the African among us is that of slavery, and the proper condition." The white laborer was not intended for slavery.

[20] *Ibid.*, 224.

Doolittle accepted this challenge and attempted to prove that the leading men of the South no longer were satisfied to justify slavery upon the grounds of Negro slavery alone. He offered his proof:

> The celebrated Review of Mr. De Bow, the Richmond Enquirer, a few years ago, the Charleston Mercury, the Richmond Examiner, the book published by Mr. Fitzhugh, which was commended to the people of the South, take the ground and justify slavery not because slaves are negroes, the descendants of Ham, but put it upon the broader ground, and the only defensible ground upon which slavery can rest, if it rests upon any foundation at all, that the natural and normal condition of the laboring man is that of a slave; that the true ground on which to reconcile this conflict between capital and labor is, that capital should own its labor and not hire it.

Again Doolittle was challenged by a Southern member, Senator Clement C. Clay of Alabama, who insisted that this statement of slavery opinion was too grave an accusation to be made without specific evidence. "I say that it is wholly unfounded, in fact, and that it does not correctly represent the sentiment of the people whom I have the honor to represent, or I believe the people of any portion of the southern States." Confidently, Doolittle proceeded to read the oft repeated articles from Fitzhugh's literary repertoire regarding the universality of the "slavery principle," irrespective of race. Even the citation from the Charleston *Mercury* that he gave was actually a reprint of Fitzhugh's ideas expressed in the Virginia press.[21] As already noted, the effect of reading isolated paragraphs from his extremely paradoxical pages was always sensational. Doolittle, of course, was unaware of the fact that his variety of citations was but the original product of one man's pen.

Fitzhugh could not afford to overlook these attentions in high places and he replied in *De Bow's Review* with a

[21] *Ibid.*, 300.

vigorous attack on Doolittle and the Homestead Bill of which the Wisconsin senator was a staunch supporter. The Virginian declared that he was not surprised that "an avowed agrarian" should find fault with his books or the *Review,* for both were eminently conservative and gave no quarter to agrarians, anarchists, infidels, and abolitionists. Doolittle, he wrote, maintained that the Homestead Bill would quiet the war between capital and labor. "Senator Doolittle is an agrarian, but, like all of that sect, he proposes to take away other people's lands; not to give away his own." This measure, Fitzhugh insisted, was both flagrantly dishonest and imprudent. The South was best entitled to the public lands won by her against Northern remonstrances. Now these lands were to be given to the paupers of Europe and to the North in order to avoid domestic land confiscation.[22]

On the same occasion of the senatorial debate on Buchanan's message, Fitzhugh received even more direct attention in Washington than before. This came from the fiery Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, leading opponent and historian of the Slave Power, who was ultimately to become vice-president under Grant. In an address on the current violations of the Bill of Rights, he asserted that the American citizen in the South now held the right of free speech subject to arbitrary laws or to the lawless acts of brutal mobs. He went on to offer evidence for this observation:

> George Fitzhugh, one of the apostles of slavery, the author of a work on "The Failure of Free Society" in which he avows the doctrine that "slavery, Black or White, is right and necessary," now declares, with regard to the "right of private judgment, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion," that "the South takes care to trammel these sterner rights (so called) quite as efficiently, by an austere public opinion, as Louis Napoleon does by law or by mere volition"; that

[22] Fitzhugh, "Our Athenian Friend," *loc. cit.,* 86–92.

"we propose to deter men from applying the ax to the root of our southern institutions, (that is, by discussions or recurring to fundamental principles,) first by moral suasion or monition, next by tar and feathers, and, that failing, by the halter."

Considering this as a typical example of Southern machinations, he concluded, "Sir, what a humiliating spectacle does the Republic now present to the gaze of mankind!" [23]

Other abolitionists returned regularly to the charge that the South had now taken new ground in the slavery issue. The brilliant orator Sidney Edgerton, a Republican member of the House from Ohio, declared that the South's attack on the Declaration of Independence arose from its new position that not only African slavery, but slavery as a principle, black or white, was right *per se*.[24] Henry Waldron, Republican representative from Michigan, in a speech favoring the Homestead Bill, "Land for the Landless," charged, "In the contest between capital and labor this [Democratic] party espouses the cause of capital. It no longer sympathizes with man, white or black, who is struggling to recover his rights or ameliorate his condition." As proof of his contention he quoted citations from four Southern authorities; one was Hammond's famous mud-sill speech; another was taken from the Richmond *Examiner*—Fitzhugh's "slavery principle" again; and a third—the largest extract—was from *Sociology for the South*. The fourth quotation from "A Democratic Senator" was another Fitzhughism regarding manual laborers as slaves. His most effective quotation came from Fitzhugh's *Sociology*, "Men are not 'born entitled to equal rights.' It *would be far nearer the truth to say that some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them; and the riding does them good.*" [25]

[23] *Cong. Globe*, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 571.
[24] *Ibid.*, 931.
[25] *Ibid.*, 1872–73.

Waldron's speech on the Homestead Bill and his assault on Fitzhugh's ideas were strikingly similar to a Congressional address by William Windom of Minnesota, "The Homestead Bill—Its Friends and Foes," which was delivered in the House on March 14, 1860. Windom, who was destined to a brilliant legislative career as an expert on transportation reforms, was then a young representative of thirty-three, recently elected by the Republican party of his district. Like Waldron, he now arose to assail the position of the Democrats on the Homestead Bill, charging that the opposition forces were no longer interested in the plight of the worker, but had allied themselves with capital. As usual, the evidence consisted of citations from Hammond, Calhoun, and the Richmond *Enquirer*'s editorials of 1855–1856—Fitzhugh's, of course; and then the author of *Sociology for the South* was assailed by name, furnishing the culminating proof of the new class-inspired doctrines of the Democrats. Windom seemed to prefer the same extracts of the book as Waldron had done, for he too was attempting to show that the new slavery principle sanctioned white bondage to capital as well as Negro chattel slavery. Did not Fitzhugh say that slavery, white or black, was right and necessary?

"Modern Democracy," he remarked, alluding to the party itself, "would place the lands of the nation in the hands of the capitalist, and permit him to buy and sell the tillers of the soil—negroes if convenient, if not, white men; for its doctrine is that *'the principle of slavery is right in itself, and does not depend on difference of complexion.'*" This assertion contained, fittingly enough, a quotation from Fitzhugh who had now become both the South and the Democratic party in the minds of many Republicans.[26] Many other antislavery men during the heated Congressional sessions of 1860 assailed Fitzhugh,

[26] *Ibid.*, Appendix, 172.

sometimes citing his ideas as proof of a successful "Calhoun Revolution" in the South.[27]

Meanwhile, several prominent Southern representatives added more fuel to the burning wrath of the antislavery leaders by deliberately taking incendiary phrases or ideas from Fitzhugh. Senator Robert M. T. Hunter of Virginia, long acquainted personally with the author of *Sociology for the South,* spoke of slavery as the "normal condition of human society." [28] Senator Mason of the same state asserted that slavery was "ennobling to both races, the white and the black." [29] These men, among several others, now seemed to accept the higher ground long advocated by Fitzhugh in language he had often used.

The Virginian was deeply gratified. Politicians, he wrote in *De Bow's Review,* were usually the last to proclaim a great truth. While Southern journals had been proclaiming for eight or ten years that the social organization of their section was a natural, rightful, and normal state, the politicians had been silent. "Not until this session, have our Southern members of Congress ventured to maintain this doctrine. They have just discovered that it is safe to maintain it, because it is popular with the people." Proudly, he mused, "Yes! it has been solemnly announced in Congress that Southern society is *normal,* Northern society *exceptional* and *experimental.*" [30] At last, he thought, he had reached his goal of convincing the South. It was evident that he had traveled a long way since his composition of *Slavery Justified* in 1849.

It was a fitting climax for the antislavery assault on Fitzhugh and his Congressional followers that Sumner himself should denounce the Virginian and the aggressive representatives of slavery. Sumner returned to the Senate

[27] *Ibid.,* Appendix, 354, 375, 99. [28] *Ibid.,* Appendix, 104–109.
[29] Cited frequently, especially *ibid.,* Appendix, 225.
[30] Fitzhugh, "Oliver Goldsmith and Doctor Johnson," *loc. cit.,* 505.

in the late spring of 1860, largely recovered from the injuries brutally inflicted upon him during the Kansas crisis by Preston Brooks. Both Brooks and his uncle, Senator Butler, in whose defense he had acted, were now dead, and Sumner was prepared with a new philippic against the "slave power," written in much the same vein as the virulent Kansas speech which had brought the blows of Brooks's cane down upon his head. Now he was back after three and one half years, an abolitionist hero who had been re-elected almost unanimously by the Massachusetts legislature.

The inspiration for his memorable speech of June 4, 1860, "The Barbarism of Slavery," had come in part from his rising anger at the strong proslavery sentiments expressed by Hunter, Mason, Davis, Hammond, and Albert G. Brown. These men he selected as his principal targets. Every offensive remark, apparently, that had been uttered by some intransigent Southern member was cited in his speech. He attempted to prove from numerous newspaper items that slavery had created a new barbarism in the South pervading every phase of its life, coarsening the moral fiber of its inhabitants, and filling everyday plantation existence with brutalities of every description. His speech, he explained in the strong tones of his earlier Kansas crusade, was a plea for freedom everywhere and for civilization. "You may reject it," he said, "but it will be only for to-day." Speaking of those who openly supported slavery, white or black, he identified these by name:

> The Richmond Enquirer, a leading journal of Slavemasters, declares, "The principle of Slavery is in itself right, and *does not depend on difference of complexion.*" And a leading writer among Slave-masters, George Fitzhugh of Virginia, in his *Sociology for the South,* declares, "Slavery, *black or white,* is right and necessary. Nature has made the weak in mind or body for slaves." And in the same vein, a Democratic paper of South Carolina [evidently the Charleston *Mercury*] has said, "Slavery

is the natural and normal condition of the laboring man, *white or black.*"

Sumner sought to give the impression that such extreme doctrines—all were Fitzhugh's—were but the intellectual counterpart of a barbarism which included lynchings, duels, the frequent use of bowie knives, the existence of slave brutalities, the degradation of women, and the absolutism of the slave master.[31]

While proslavery forces fumed, the antislavery leaders were delighted by Sumner's powerful indictment. Friends, however, feared for his life. Republican managers of the Lincoln campaign were at first somewhat hesitant to use so militant an address in the campaign—and Sumner had intended that it should be used. But they were soon convinced of the wisdom of circulating the "Barbarism of Slavery" speech for major propaganda purposes in achieving Lincoln's election. The attack on Fitzhugh, therefore, shared the general obloquy of the antislavery element. The Boston *Sunday Transcript,* a Republican organ, praised Sumner's challenge to the abstract principles that had been asserted by the proslavery representatives. This paper too assumed that Fitzhugh's ideas were typical of the South:

Do not Benjamin, Toombs, Stephens, Curry, Keitt, Lamar, Hunter, Slidell, Brown, Hammond, Chestnut [*sic*], Mason, Pryor, Clingman, Fitzhugh and all Southern politicians discuss the question of slavery in the abstract? Do they not deliver long arguments to prove that slavery is right, just, benign, civilizing, and necessary? that it is the proper condition of the negro and the working men? And is any free Northern man so poor a poltroon as to say that these men shall not be replied to? [32]

Again as during the election of 1856, Fitzhugh's name was to be frequently mentioned in the Republican campaign of 1860. Antislavery orators followed the leadership

[31] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 2601; Edward L. Pierce (ed.), *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner* (Boston, 1893), III, 605–606.

[32] Boston *Liberator,* July 6, 1860.

of Sumner in inveighing against the author of Port Royal either by name or by reference to the slavery principle doctrine. Lydia Maria Child's pamphlet, *The Patriarchal Institution,* condemning Fitzhugh and those who accepted his philosophy, was not an isolated utterance of its kind. Among proslavery adherents there were not a few who lent color to abolitionist charges by asserting the gospel of Fitzhugh's theories with all the fervor of neophytes.[33]

Whatever insincerity characterized some Northern campaigners in attributing his ideas to the entire South, there is no doubt that his words shocked men and women of unquestioned integrity like Lincoln, Sumner, Doolittle, and Mrs. Child who—however mistakenly—considered the Virginian to be representative of the proslavery South. Fitzhugh, despite his peaceful intentions, had done his full share to make the sectional conflict irrepressible. Indeed, more than one congressman placed side by side Seward's famous Rochester speech of 1858 and a Richmond *Enquirer* editorial of January 22, 1856, obviously written by Fitzhugh. The New York senator had remarked, "It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation." But previously Fitzhugh had also written, "Two opposing and conflicting forms of society *cannot,* among civilized men, coexist and endure. The one *must* give way, and cease to exist; the other become universal."[34] In his New Haven speech of March 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln commented on the "irrepressible conflict" phrase, "How they rail at Seward for that saying! . . . Even Roger A. Pryor, editor of the Richmond *Enquirer,* uttered the same sentiment in almost the same language."[35] "Pryor," as we have noted, was in this case none other than Fitzhugh.

[33] See the letter of "A Citizen of South Carolina," *ibid.,* November 9, 1860.

[34] See *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 224–25.

[35] Nicolay and Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works,* I, 624.

Chapter XVIII

"WAR ELEVATES THE SENTIMENTS"

As a good Southerner, Fitzhugh followed the secessionists to war, although with reluctance at first. Southern nationalism, he had always contended, could be achieved within the loose federal fabric of the Union. Despite his denunciation of Black Republicanism and his occasional justification of secession as a measure of self-defense, he had hoped that Buchanan and the Northern conservatives would save the Union. As these hopes ebbed, his essays for De Bow began to assume an increasingly intransigent tone, in keeping with the new militant sentiments of his section. During the campaign of 1860 he had adopted Seward's challenging phrase, writing, "There is an 'irrepressible conflict' of ideas, thoughts, opinions, philosophies, impending. Reformation has run mad, liberty has run into licentiousness. . . . We must raise the issue of conservatism against anarchy." [1]

From the very first he had assailed Lincoln's Chicago platform of 1860 for its assertion of Jeffersonian equalitarianism, and the liberal philosophy of the Homestead Bill. The Republican platform, he pointed out, was frankly based on the compact doctrine of Locke with all its revolutionary social implications of "free love, free lands, and free negroes." Since the anticlerical Jefferson stood as spiritual godfather to this platform, it was clear that the Republicans were determined to destroy the Church as a

[1] George Fitzhugh, "Slavery Aggressions," in *De Bow's Review*, XXVIII (1860), 138.

governing force in human affairs. "Long before the Revolution," wrote Fitzhugh, "Mr. Jefferson had maintained in arguments before the Virginia Colonial Council, that Christianity was no part of our law." [2]

Frequently he recurred to his theory of invoking the American tradition of nonintercourse measures against an enemy—in this case Massachusetts. If that state persisted in blocking the return of fugitive slaves and in sending emissaries to the South to stir up insurrection, then retaliation should take such forms as state license taxes on the products of Massachusetts, the dismissal of her citizens employed in the South, and finally the cutting off of all intercourse with that state. This was his plan of "disunion within the Union," aimed to secure the co-operation of Northern conservatives against the recently victorious radical forces. During the early part of 1860, he counseled:

> Let us of the South be patient, and wait for that process of subsidence and stratification in Northern society which will be sure to put our friends uppermost; for it is as natural for *them* to ride, as it is for the *masses* to be ridden. He who denies that God made the multitude to be directed, governed, and controlled by the few, and that this common multitude is happier, more virtuous, and prosperous, when governed, than when governing, quarrels with the course of nature, and disputes the wisdom and beneficence of Deity. Universal suffrage may put society wrong-side up, but nature is all-powerful, and soon brings down the lower layer, or stratum, to its true place.

De Bow read this article with little enthusiasm commenting, "We confess no particular admiration of this '*Disunion within the Union,*' of which Mr. Fitzhugh speaks, and of which the Harper's Ferry affair is a necessary type. We better like *disunion out of it,* when the issue comes." [3]

Fitzhugh, as already noted, was ever prepared to ad-

[2] *Id.*, "The Declaration of Independence and the Republican Party," *ibid.*, XXIX (1860), 179.

[3] *Id.*, "Disunion within the Union," *loc. cit.*, 5.

vocate *cultural* secession from the Northern states. In an essay on the postal laws, he denounced those Federal acts which made it possible by uniform low rates, throughout the Union, for the large Northern cities to make Southern rural areas tributary to it. The South was not only robbed to create the princely fortunes of "a few vulgar, cunning, selfish millionaires," but the process of centralization, fostered in part by the postal laws, poured the worst of Northern journals and books into the plantation states. Southern publishers and booksellers, he advised, would do well to look into the subject. He hoped that countermeasures could be taken that would enable the South to cease aping the North.[4]

An anonymous reader of *De Bow's Review* from Athens, Georgia, wrote a lengthy letter to the editor, attacking "Messrs Rhett, Memminger, De Bow, Fitzhugh, *id omne genus*" for attempting to convert the South into a monarchy. "We the people," he asserted, "—for I am one of the people, one of the poor peasants of the land that the secessionists abhor, as did Cerberus the light of day—are gradually becoming conscious of the conspiracy and plot against our liberties; and when we are fully convinced and roused we shall 'shake off the disunionists as dewdrops from the lion's mane,' both North and South." Fitzhugh, he believed, was the boldest and most outspoken of his "coadjutors in treason." These charges were quickly denied by the Virginian, who repeated his theory of government as a natural organism which determined the relative suitability of monarchism or republicanism according to circumstances.[5]

That Fitzhugh was moving gradually in the direction of De Bow's belief regarding the inevitability of secession became apparent during 1859–1860. In a genealogical

[4] *Id.*, "Uniform Postage, Railroads, Telegraphs, Fashions, etc.," *loc. cit.*, 657–64.

[5] Editorial Note, *De Bow's Review*, XXVIII (1860), 612–13; Fitzhugh, "Our Athenian Friend," *loc. cit.*, 87.

essay written during the latter months of 1859, he injected a strong political note, warning his readers that "some Cromwell of the North may extend his despotism over us, if we do not detach ourselves in time. It may be better to avoid a falling house." Disunion, he said, was preferable to dishonor and if a president were chosen who proposed to deny the South its rights in the territories, that was the moment for disunion. "*Equality* or *Disunion* should be our motto!" [6]

In a subsequent essay, "Small Nations," he reaffirmed his position that in the event of Lincoln's election, the Union should be dissolved. He hoped, however, that the Republican candidate would be defeated so that the South might be better prepared for an independent existence at a later date. For the Southern abstractionists who argued over doctrines of political sovereignty, he expressed his contempt, insisting that the states were already nations in fact. Formal nationhood as a product of a written instrument alone he regarded as an absurd creature of fiction. He was willing to concede that the state rights ideas of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798 pointed in the right direction, but these did not go far enough along the lines of historic realism. "Nor, do we think," he added, "that even the Calhoun school has ever fully comprehended the origin, character, and anatomical naturalness and necessity of *State nationality* (That's the word—not sovereignty)." [7]

On the day preceding Lincoln's election, Fitzhugh sadly expressed his final acceptance of secession as the sole remaining alternative for the South. "In the Union," he wrote bitterly to the Charleston *Mercury,* "there is no hope for us. Let us gather courage from despair, and quit the Union." This mood, however, was rejected by the editor who caustically remarked, "Mr. Fitzhugh is a little excitable. We intend

[6] Fitzhugh, "The Northern Neck of Virginia," *loc. cit.,* 288.
[7] *Id.,* "Small Nations," in *De Bow's Review,* XXIX (1860), 561–69.

to 'quit the Union,' but without any 'despair' whatever. We'll quit it with a round hip! hip! hurrah!!" [8] The drums had begun to roll.

By January, 1861, Fitzhugh was speculating regarding the future policy of a Southern confederation. Resources and climate, he thought, would make for an economically balanced and self-sufficient South. The Northern border states of the Confederacy should take the place of New England as a commercial area within this new system. Like Louis Napoleon's France, whose motto was "The Empire means peace," the South, too, would cease the imperialistic adventures of foreign wars and filibustering to grow cotton and sugar, to promote education, and to build trade. An independent South would profit from its temperate climate to enjoy the full benefits of civilization, for this high stage of human progress was an exotic element in cold latitudes, as was evident from history. "The Mediterranean latitudes in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the country south of Mason and Dixon's line," he observed, "is the true and only seat of high civilization." [9]

When the newspapers reported a proposal during the early months of 1861 for the independence of New York City, the Virginian immediately hailed the "Republic of New York" in a special article on the subject. Evidently with an eye on the pro-Southern element in the great metropolis, he pointed out the mutual bonds of sympathy between New York and the South. By all means, he urged, the city must cut itself off from the infidel North. Outside the city, he insisted, the state was "Yankee and puritanical; composed of as base, unprincipled, superstitious, licentious, and agrarian and anarchical population as any on earth." Even this statement was not strong enough for him. "Nay, we do not hesitate to say it, it is the vilest

[8] Charleston *Mercury*, November 9, 1860, quoted in Phillips, *Course of the South to Secession*, 160.

[9] George Fitzhugh, "Cuba: The March of Empire and the Course of Trade," in *De Bow's Review*, XXX (1861), 30–42.

population on earth." [10] The war spirit was descending upon Fitzhugh.

The classic impotence of President Buchanan's final message to Congress in December, 1860, evoked scorn among Republicans and contempt among secessionists. Yet, Fitzhugh could see in Buchanan a great statesman whose words had been misunderstood. He interpreted the message to mean not only that the Federal government admitted it lacked power to coerce a seceding state, but also that there would be no attempt to hold any such state as a "tributary province" by means of the revenue laws. "He plainly intimates to South Carolina," Fitzhugh pointed out, "that if no one will hold the collector's place at Charleston, that then the collecting of the revenue must cease, just as the administration of justice has ceased, by the resignation of the Federal judges." The seceding South, therefore, had a friend in the White House.

Whatever contradictions existed in Buchanan's message seemed attributable, in the mind of Fitzhugh, to the nature of the Constitution, "the most absurd and contradictory paper ever penned by practical men," fully comparable to Locke's fantastic Constitution for the Carolinas. Genuine government, such as state government, was not a creature of compact, but of common law, which came with the first settlers. The Federal government was but a product of an agreement—a social contract—resting on opinion, rather than force, while true government was ever a thing of force. Secession could not be considered revolution because the Federal government possessed no features of nationality requisite to halt it. This last statement of Fitzhugh's was actually in direct contradiction to Buchanan's contention made in the final message: "Secession is neither more nor less than revolution. It may or it may not be a justifiable revolution, but still it is revolution." Fitzhugh did not care to accept the President's

[10] *Id.*, "The Republic of New York," *ibid.*, 181–87.

reasoning that secession was but the Jeffersonian right of revolution, sanctioned by that same Declaration of Independence which gave such aid and comfort to abolitionism. He hoped to see the right of secession established in the Confederacy, not on the basis of any natural rights doctrine but because the Southern Confederacy could not expect to be more than the old Federal union—a mere partnership, dissolvable at will.[11]

There was much in the Virginian's romantic ideal of feudalism and chivalry and in his imperialistic views which made the coming of war far from distasteful to him. At times, it is true, he professed a Christian repugnance to wars of conquest, but these moods appeared unworthy of extended comment. In *Sociology for the South* he had written, "Wars are fine civilizers, for all men dread violent death; hence, among barbarians, the implements of warfare are superior to any other of their manufactures, but they lead the way to other improvements." [12] At that time the Richmond *Enquirer,* too, had proclaimed, "It is by war you conquer the barbarian race, and by slavery you reduce them to labor and the art of civilized life. Slavery and war have thus been the two great forerunners of civilization." [13]

In an extensive discussion of the subject, "Love of Danger and of War," written in 1860, Fitzhugh attempted to prove that war was a sociological and psychological necessity of life. "Hunger and thirst, when not endured too long, are the only means of procuring pleasure from food and drink," he said. Elaborating this idea, he remarked:

[11] *Id.*, "The Message, the Constitution, and the Times," *ibid.*, 156–67.

[12] *Id.*, *Sociology for the South,* 19. Fitzhugh's imperialistic outlook and that of his contemporaries are carefully noted in Julius W. Pratt, "The Ideology of American Expansion," in Avery O. Craven (ed.), *Essays in Honor of William E. Dodd* (Chicago, 1935), 335–53, particularly 345.

[13] George Fitzhugh, "Destiny of the Slave States," in *De Bow's Review,* XVII (1854), 282–83.

There is nothing good or evil in the abstract, or of itself. The sum of human life is made up, both physically and morally, of opposing, yet concurrent forces, some of which we term good, and others evil; yet, being all equally essential to life, and life being desirable above all things, they are, in truth, all good.

From this type of reasoning it was a simple step to show the role of love of danger and war in human life. Sport, he implied, was a sublimated form of a universal desire for the emotions of danger. Historically, war had always been considered a most honorable pursuit. He argued:

War elevates the sentiments and the aims of men, makes them love, honor and appreciate each other according to each one's moral worth; begets enterprise and hardihood of character, makes men brave and self-reliant, adds new force and vigor to mind and body, strips off masks, exposes humbug and pretension, and exhibits each man's true worth and character.

In a still more emphatic mood, Fitzhugh found new virtues for war:

Frequent wars of invasion are necessary to keep nations progressive. War alone subjects all to those perils, trials, vicissitudes, dangers, and privations, that are necessary agencies in developing, maturing, and fortifying character, and in exciting intellectual energy, activity, and inventiveness.

A period of long peace he thought enervating, and attributed the decline of the Roman Empire to the effects of a prolonged peace which had sapped the vigor of its citizens.[14]

In still another essay which dealt with the natural origin of war as a social institution, he observed in somewhat contradictory fashion, "Wars seem unnecessary and unnatural, but God, who is wiser than we, has instituted them for salutary purposes, and prompted mankind to prepare for them." The "more rabid" of the Republicans, he pointed out, were pacifists and therefore warred against nature. He

[14] *Id.*, "Love of Danger and of War," *ibid.*, XXVIII (1860), 294–305.

found unique virtues in militarism, "The most perfect system of government is to be found in armies, because in them there is least of liberty, and most of order, subordination, and obedience." [15]

In the light of modern Fascist doctrines regarding pacifism and war, Fitzhugh's theories are indeed startling. Benito Mussolini's much-quoted article on Fascist doctrine offers almost a paraphrase of the Virginian's sentiments expressed on the eve of the Civil War:

> Fascism . . . discards pacifism as a cloak for cowardly supine renunciation in contra-distinction to self-sacrifice. War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it. All other tests are substitutes which never place a man face to face with himself before the alternative of life or death. Therefore all doctrines which postulate peace at all costs are incompatible with Fascism.[16]

As the war progressed, even avowed pacifists like Ralph Waldo Emerson, under the stimulus of the Northern crusading spirit, could see beneficent forces too in war. During 1862–1863 Emerson could write encomiums of war in language suggestive at least of Fitzhugh's. On one occasion he declared:

> War is a realist, shatters everything flimsy and shifty, sets aside all false issues, and breaks through all that is not real as itself; comes to organize opinions and parties, resting on the necessities of man; like its own cannonade, comes crushing in through party walls that have stood fifty or sixty years as if they were solid.

Soon thereafter, Emerson added this comment:

> The benefit of war is that the appeal not being longer to letter and form, but now to the roots of strength in the people,

[15] *Id.*, "The Declaration of Independence and the Republican Party," *loc. cit.*, 185.

[16] Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism* (Florence, 1936), 26–27.

the moral aspect becomes important, and is urgently presented and debated; whilst, in preceding quiet times, custom is able to stifle this discussion as sentimental, and bring in the brazen devil himself.[17]

It was fitting from a nationalist viewpoint for Fitzhugh's doctrines of war to be associated with his racial theories. At the beginning of 1861 he became a convert to the racial doctrines of Dr. Van Evrie, editor of the New York proslavery *Day Book,* and recent author of *Negroes and Negro Slavery.* Hitherto Fitzhugh had avoided the racialism of the Nott-Gliddon school as unchristian and a product of mere prejudice. In 1857 he had even maintained:

> This argument about races is an infidel procedure, and we had better give up the negroes than the Bible. It is a double assertion of the falsity of the Bible—first, as it maintains that mankind have not sprang from a common parentage; and, secondly, as it contends that it is morally wrong to enslave white men, who, the Bible informs us, were enslaved by the express command of God.[18]

Despite the conversion of De Bow to the racial doctrine of the Negro's inherent inferiority as early as the forties[19] and the honors conferred upon the racialist, Dr. Josiah Nott, in *De Bow's Review,* Fitzhugh had remained adamant against this doctrine.

Now, as the rumblings of war came nearer, the Virginian professed himself convinced by the pseudoscientific demonstration of Van Evrie that "the negro is physically, morally, and intellectually, a different being (from necessity) from the white man, and must ever so remain." Hence arose the inevitability of the Negro's subordination to the

[17] Edward W. Emerson and Waldo E. Forbes (eds.), *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1909–1914), IX, 461.

[18] Fitzhugh, "Southern Thought," *loc. cit.,* 347.

[19] James D. B. De Bow, "Ethnological Researches—Is the African and Caucasian of Common Origin?" in *De Bow's Review,* IX (1850), 243–45.

white man. The ancients, with their intelligent white slaves, had never faced this problem, so that it awaited Van Evrie's researches to prove the scientific justification for the inferior social position of the Negro, whether it was called slavery or not. " 'Tis blood, race, species, genus, and family," said Fitzhugh, "that constitute the physical of man."

Van Evrie's book had received the endorsements of the political leaders of the South, including Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens. It was most opportune propaganda for that section in the midst of a struggle which centered about the slavery institution. To provide the justification of science in behalf of the South, Fitzhugh proposed that the New Yorker and himself collaborate upon a new sociological vocabulary, drawing from the linguistic fountains of Greek and Latin. Van Evrie's "subordinations" in the racial sphere would be paralleled by Fitzhugh's terms of social subordinations. On one point, however, the Virginian took issue with Van Evrie. The latter's *Day Book* had stated on several occasions that neither Fitzhugh nor the Charleston *Mercury* correctly represented public opinion in the South. To this, Fitzhugh replied with heat:

> This valuable and excellent paper is grossly mistaken, if it supposes that intelligent and reading men of the South, under sixty years of age, are not almost unanimously of opinion, that "Slave society is the normal state of society, and free society a mere experiment, that has failed in Europe, and shows symptoms of failure at the North."

But as far as Van Evrie's volume was concerned, he conceded that it was "the most original, profound, and valuable book that has issued from the press of Europe or America, for many years past." [20] The war came too soon

[20] Fitzhugh, "The Black and White Races of Men," *loc. cit.*, 446–56. For the endorsements of Van Evrie by Jefferson Davis and Alexander H.

for Fitzhugh to profit fully from this new light on racial science, but fresh opportunities were to come with Reconstruction.

Shortly before reading Van Evrie's book, he had propounded the theory that the Caucasian alone was the originally civilized race and had never lost its culture. All other races had descended from it and when these were found at a savage level, it represented degeneration. He applauded the racialist doctrines of Count de Gobineau, which were ultimately to do yeoman service for Hitler's National Socialists; but Fitzhugh ignored the claims of "Aryan" superiority, which he felt did too much honor to the liberal, abolitionist-minded Germans who had arrived since 1848.[21] Soon he was saying, "Blood, climate, and locality, determine human character." [22] The glorification of hereditary and traditional influences, enhanced by Van Evrie's racialism, now led him to interpret the war as the clash of races and cultures:

> The Cavaliers, Jacobites, and Huguenots who settled the South, naturally hate, contemn, and despise the Puritans who settled the North. The former are master races, the latter, a slave race, the descendants of the Saxon serfs. The former are Mediterranean races, descendants of the Romans; for Cavaliers and Jacobites are of Norman descent, and the Normans were of Roman descent, and so were the Huguenots.

As for the Northern descendants of Saxons and Angles, they represented the type of a "cold-blooded, amphibious biped." [23]

In an article, "The Revolutions of '76 and '61 Con-

Stephens, see Van Evrie, *Negroes and Negro Slavery: Introductory Number*, title page.

[21] Fitzhugh, "The Declaration of Independence and the Republican Party," *loc. cit.*, 184; *id.*, "The Superiority of Southern Races—Review of Count de Gobineau's Work," in *De Bow's Review*, XXX (1861), 369–81.

[22] *Id.*, "The Pioneers, Preachers, and the People of the Mississippi Valley," in *De Bow's Review*, XXX (1861), 259.

[23] *Id.*, "The Message, the Constitution, and the Times," *loc. cit.*, 162.

trasted," Fitzhugh interpreted the Civil War as a conservative revolution, having its roots in a racial setting. The Southern revolution of 1861, he maintained, prepared for by such men as Calhoun, Hunter, and Tyler, was a reactionary wave rolling back the excesses of the spirit of the Reformation and "a solemn protest against the doctrines of natural liberty, human equality and the social contracts as taught by Locke and the American sages of 1776." A conservative inheritance had reasserted itself:

> We are Tories, not only in feeling, sentiment and opinion, but Tories by blood and inheritance. Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the Carolinas colonized the rest of the South and Southwest, and these States were settled by Cavaliers, which was the first name that the Tories bore. . . . From the Independents, the most ultra, cruel, ignorant and fanatical part of that half the New Englanders, or, Yankees, the controlling element at the North, are descended.[24]

To the myth of the Cavalier inheritance of the South, Fitzhugh added another, the pervasive influence of the aristocratic French Huguenots. Amidst the angry passions of war, he found time for historical research on the Huguenots of the South.[25]

The American Revolution, he now wrote as he had declared several times before, was no revolution at all, but a war of independence. "All the bombastic absurdity in our Declaration of Independence about the inalienable rights of man, had about as much to do with the occasion as would a sermon or oration on the teething of a child or the kittening of a cat." The doctrines of that essay had been borrowed from Locke's materialistic philosophy, whose revolutionary implications he himself did not comprehend. Against him, Fitzhugh cited with approval

[24] *Id.*, "Revolutions of '76 and '61 Contrasted," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., IV (1867), 36–47; also in *Southern Literary Messenger*, XXXVII (1863), 718–26.

[25] *Id.*, "Huguenots of the South," in *De Bow's Review*, XXX (1861), 513–21.

Locke's antagonist, Robert Filmer, and his *Patriarcha* on the divine right of kings. Europe had suffered disruption and dislocation of all social ties because of the consequences of Locke's liberal philosophy, and Lincoln and the Republicans had added this ferment into their party. "The Fathers of the Republic," said Fitzhugh, "most officiously and unwisely rested the splendid political edifice which they erected on powder-cask abstractions—to the biggest one of which Horace Greeley and his confreres applied a slow match at Chicago. This produced, on or about the 4th of March, '61, the grandest explosion the world ever witnessed." [26]

As the South went to war, militant secessionists repeated the aristocratic phrases of Fitzhugh in support of their cause, and Union propagandists insisted that these were representative ideas of the Southern Democrats. Stephens declared on March 21, 1861, in a speech at Savannah, "Our new government . . . rests upon the great truth that the negro is not the equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition." The Richmond *Examiner,* in an editorial of May 28, 1863, asserted bluntly, "For 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' we have substituted Slavery, Subordination, and Government." The editor added that "there are slave races born to serve, master races born to govern." Such, he said, were the fundamental principles inherited from the ancient world, forgotten for a time by a perverse generation, and now by those principles Southerners would live, and in their defense show themselves ready to die.[27]

During the war years Fitzhugh pretended to retire to an ivory tower of intellectual detachment above the emotions of battle. He had conceived the idea during the late fifties of preparing a book on moral science—he disliked

[26] *Id.,* "Revolutions of '76 and '61 Contrasted," *loc. cit.,* 36–42.
[27] *Democratic Opinions on Slavery (1776–1863)* (n.p., n.d.).

the word philosophy—which would explain the truths of a novel system, "antinomic pathology." He had begun to develop his new ideas in *De Bow's Review,* and when this journal was compelled to suspend publication at the end of 1861, he sent his essays on the subject to the *Southern Literary Messenger* of Richmond. Although the book was never to be realized, several chapters in the form of articles were actually completed before he abandoned the project.

In many of his earlier articles he had declared that liberalism, with its doctrine of "self-interest" as a regulative force, had vitiated moral philosophy and rendered it useless. His "sociology" had been primarily an attempt to combat liberal thought in its various manifestations. Now he moved towards a form of historical idealism which seemed to bear the same relationship to Southern conservatism that Hegelian idealism had had to European absolutism. Both held in common the idealization of certain traditional institutions, particularly those related to the family and society—and in Hegel's case, the state. Although Fitzhugh never mentioned Hegel by name and it is doubtful whether he was acquainted with German idealism, his system bore certain evidences of similarity. Especially prominent was the element of dualism in the Virginian's "conflicting and concurrent forces" of the so-called "antinomes," suggesting the Hegelian reconciliation of opposites, "thesis" and "antithesis," into the solvent of "synthesis."

"We hold," wrote Fitzhugh, "that all moral philosophies, when proposed as universal truths, are false." His remedy was not to erect moral relativism into a system, for this would have led to the anarchic results that he feared; but he hoped to strengthen society's traditional values by emphasizing the role of human intuition and feeling. From Proudhon, who had made certain observations regarding the economic contradictions of contem-

porary capitalism, he borrowed the idea underlying the antinomes, which recognized the existence of mutually antagonistic social elements within any given social situation. Fitzhugh was under the impression that his friend, Archibald Roane, who possessed considerable classical lore, had coined the word antinomes for the occasion; hence he was unaware of its accepted use in philosophic terminology.[28]

Proudhon had shown, explained Fitzhugh, that in mathematics the assertion of one proposition is the negation of its opposite; but in political economy, it was evident, truths conflicted and contradicted each other. "In the physical and moral world," he wrote, "every truth has its opposite truth. Conflicting forces sustain physical existence, vegetable, animal, and human life; and conflicting forces sustain the moral world, sustain society and human government." Because prevailing philosophic systems, he thought, failed to take into account these antithetic elements, these tended to be one-sided and lacked balance. "We propose to write a moral pathology, which shall treat the diseases of society symptomatically and tentatively, just as the doctors now treat the diseases of the body." He would treat an ailment according to the symptoms shown by the patient, rather than rely on a general rule for the category to which the disease belonged. This he called "pathology." [29]

Perhaps the best key to Fitzhugh's new "system" is furnished by his analogy to the natural sciences, particularly to Newtonian physics. "Centrifugal and centripetal forces, by their opposing and concurrent power, keep the heavenly bodies in motion," Fitzhugh pointed out, in explaining the "conflicting yet concurrent forces" of the social world. The business of philosophy was to preserve the

[28] George Fitzhugh, "The False and the True Political Economy," in *De Bow's Review*, XXX (1861), 540–46.

[29] *Id.*, "Law Reports—Multiplicity of Law Books," *loc. cit.*, 82–83.

proper balance between these forces, "since the undue preponderance of either occasions death." Such a conception he claimed to have found in a suggestive form in the writings of Sir James Mackintosh. Many an eighteenth and nineteenth century philosopher, like Fitzhugh, had begun his "system" with an analogy from the natural sciences —too often a misleading one.

Fitzhugh never worked out his antinomic pathology beyond defining its purpose. He discarded "rules" and a priori reasoning. "Rejecting reason as a guide, we will follow the promptings of feeling and instinct, and the diverse and shifting lights of human experience. We shall deal only with *phenomena* (appearances) because we know nothing, and can never know anything about *noumena* (realities)." In education he would rely on the feelings, intuitions, judgments, experience, and common sense of parents and teachers as "almost infallible guides." Human character and circumstances were too complex for one to lay down rules for education.[30]

In later years he attempted to explain his position more precisely:

> "Antinomic-Pathology" proposes, then, from time to time, to adjust the balance between moral antinomes, as either, or any of them tend to excess. It differs from philosophy in this, that philosophy is the search after the "right or true," whilst "Antinomic-Pathology" is founded upon the premise or assumption, that the "right or the true" never has been discovered, and never, from the limited nature of his faculties, can be discovered by man, and that, therefore, he must be satisfied with proximate right or truth, with the expedient, the right under circumstances, and give up the hopeless pursuit of absolute, universal, unvarying right and truth.[31]

[30] *Id.*, "Antinomic Pathology," in *Southern Literary Messenger,* XXXVII (1863), 415–19.

[31] *Id.*, "Moral Philosophies," in *De Bow's Review,* A.W.S., III (1867), 402–10.

Something of Fitzhugh's notion of social antagonisms can be inferred by recalling his dualistic interpretation of slavery and freedom, labor and capital, and war and peace, in which each quality was held to be a "good" under various circumstances. One can only conjecture whether this line of reasoning would not have brought him ultimately to some form of extreme pragmatism.

One critic in the *Southern Literary Messenger* who had discussed this system privately with Fitzhugh, expressed his strong opposition to this type of analysis: "You, my dear sir, who have been characterized so long by your genial sympathies, whose impulses have been on the side of virtue and honor, and whose principles—if you have any—are, I dare say, of a harmless character, have become the special champion of the moral elements in man's nature, at the expense, I fear, of the intellectual." The writer was willing to concede the existence of antagonisms in nature, but remarked that he failed to see how Fitzhugh could offer a system without rules.[32] Ultimately, the Virginian did claim at least one convert, William Archer Cocke, a regular literary contributor to *De Bow's Review* who wrote in 1867 on "The Harmony of Creation." [33]

Fitzhugh's abortive system of antinomic pathology, chaotic as it appears, is of interest for the light it casts upon that persistent dualistic quality which permeates his writings. In his long ambitious endeavors to justify slavery, he had drawn his sociological observations from a philosophic antithesis between those, like himself, who followed the Aristotelian organic conception of society and those who, like Locke and Jefferson, preferred the starry and uncharted path of Plato's idealism. He had emphasized, *ad nauseam,* the antithesis of North and South, liberal and conservative, experimentalist and traditionalist. These

[32] Crito, "To the Author of Antinomic Pathology," in *Southern Literary Messenger,* XXXVII (1863), 627–32.

[33] William A. Cocke, "The Harmony of Creation," in *De Bow's Review,* A.W.S., III (1867), 278–90.

differences he had hoped to resolve into a harmonious unity according to the tests afforded him by history and insight. Like Karl Marx, who had transformed Hegel's dialectic method into a statement of a historic class war, ultimately—in theory—to be resolved into the peace of a classless society, Fitzhugh hoped to create a science which could reconcile the inner conflicts of ante-bellum society along the lines of a patriarchal civilization. From the contending armies of Grant and Lee on the battlefield about his home, he expected little in the achievement of this self-imposed mission.

Chapter XIX

"BUT THERE IS NO PEACE"

THE peaceful routine of the beautiful Rappahannock Valley suddenly ended amidst the heavy shells of contending armies. Tidewater folk, accustomed to think of their homes as isolated from the fanfare of sensational newspaper events, found themselves in the midst of an historic battleground of the first magnitude. Fitzhugh's much-vaunted Northern Neck of Virginia, with its calm everyday existence, where crime, he had insisted, was unknown, now witnessed the wholesale slaughter of a relentless fratricidal war. Little Fredericksburg attained world importance as Grant's powerful armies hammered away at Lee's stubborn forces in the bloody Battle of the Wilderness and the Union campaign for Richmond completed the disruption of tidewater life. Refugees streamed into the beleaguered and battered capital of the Southern Confederacy.

Such events could not leave Port Royal untouched. Planters deserted their farms in the neighborhood, and the village itself became a surreptitious recruiting and supply point for Confederate soldiers. In August, 1862, a small Union force invaded the town, destroying its ferryboat and other means of transportation on the Rappahannock.[1] Less than a year later another small Union detachment entered Port Royal to destroy some wagon trains and capture several prisoners.[2] Successive expeditions car-

[1] *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880–1901), Ser. I, Vol. XII, Pt. II, 241.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, 137.

ried off materials useful for the Union war effort. Most spectacular of all was the postwar search for Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth, who fled to Port Royal in April, 1865, after being ferried across the Rappahannock River from Port Conway. Disguised as a wounded Confederate soldier, he was at length captured by a Union force and shot, after offering resistance, at the farm of Richard H. Garrett, three miles outside Port Royal.[3]

The Fitzhugh family shared fully in the changes wrought by war. Young Robert Hunter Fitzhugh, now twenty-five years of age, had completed an engineering course at the University of Virginia and joined the Engineer Corps of Brigadier General Thomas J. Churchill as a captain. He was stationed with the forces of Albert Pike in the Lower Arkansas division and later assigned to duty in the engineering corps at Charleston under Lieutenant General William J. Hardee.[4] On several occasions he received praise from his superiors for noteworthy military services. A family tradition has it that Robert Fitzhugh lived to be the last survivor of Lee's personal staff.[5] The other son, George Stuart Fitzhugh, although seventeen at the outbreak of war, joined the Fredericksburg battery of artillery under Captain Carter Braxton and served in the Army of Northern Virginia; after the Battle of Antietam he was commissioned lieutenant.[6] In the midst of the internecine struggle Fitzhugh's elderly mother, Lucy Stuart, died in 1862 at the age of seventy-six, having survived her husband, Dr. George Fitzhugh, by almost forty years.

As the battle lines drew closer, the family with many of their neighbors left for Richmond. By the beginning of 1862 Fitzhugh was serving as a minor clerk in the auditor's

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. XLVI, Pt. I, 1317–22. Some Confederate activities at Port Royal are noted in the Richmond *Daily Examiner,* October 13, 1863.

[4] *Official Records,* Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Pt. I, 782; Vol. XLVII, Pt. II, 1195.

[5] Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith to the author, September 9, 1939.

[6] Wingfield, *History of Caroline County,* 280; Skinker, *Samuel Skinker and His Descendants,* 201.

office of the Confederate Department of the Treasury.[7] Meanwhile, Port Royal was shelled and the end of the war found the old Brockenbrough mansion in which the Fitzhughs had lived badly damaged by these missiles. It seemed as if the ironic symbolism of war had directed the shell to the home of the leading proslavery militant of the South.

These stirring years did not dampen the romantic martial ardor and chivalrous ideals of Fitzhugh. Among the occasional articles which he wrote during 1861–1865 was a bellicose theme, "The Uses and Morality of War and Peace," published in the first number of the newly revived *De Bow's Review* during 1866. Long periods of peace, he asserted, created a subtle war within society in which a selfish universal pursuit of gain begot fierce and angry competitions, setting each man at war with his neighbor. As usual he expressed his sentiments in the most extreme terms:

> When nations, communities, sects, or individuals, resolve never to fight, and persevere in practicing their resolves, they take to cheating, and become thoroughly contemptible, selfish, and sensual—lose their intellectual and moral natures, assimilate themselves to the lowest order of the brute creation, and grow fat and lazy, like well-fed pigs. All history shows that overpacific individuals, sects, and nations become knavish, cowardly, mean, and contemptible, depraved in morals and in intellect, and, finally, the easy prey of more warlike, virtuous, and intelligent peoples.

American character, both North and South, he feared, had suffered much from a long-continued peace. Everyone worshiped the "almighty dollar" and all education was devoted to money-making. Things were worse in the North —of course—where the insidious doctrine of nonresistance had gained a foothold. "The war," he rejoiced, "has purified and elevated our natures, taught us to respect ourselves, and has won for us the respect of foreign na-

[7] Richmond *Semi-Weekly Examiner,* January 29, 1862.

tions." In fact, his admiration for the "uses and morality of war" compelled him to admit that he was unable to discover the morality of peace. Possibly, he conceded, peace had its uses "if none other, than it is needed to repair the damages of war." Patriotism, the noblest of human virtues, was dormant and almost extinguished in time of peace but it "bursts forth with beautiful light and intensity in time of war." There were more generous and charitable actions performed in one day of war, he claimed, than in a year of peace. Rich and poor came together in the midst of common suffering. As for war profiteers, these were very few; most instances of high prices, he believed, were due to the inevitable scarcities of war and were justified by rising costs. Recurring to his antinomic pathology, he observed:

> Peace and war are antinomes, whose due alternation preserves the health and well-being, and promotes the growth, progress and improvement of society. War draws men closer together, makes them dependent on each other, allays domestic strife and competition, in a great measure equalizes conditions, banishes selfishness, and makes men live, labor and fight for each other; and continually seeing and feeling their mutual inter-dependence, it begets brotherly love.

The antithesis of peace and war, he therefore concluded, was a necessary part of the antinomes, or opposing and concurrent forces which constituted necessary parts of the "economy of the moral world." [8]

Although De Bow was willing to agree with his oldest contributor that war had its compensations, one well-known subscriber, Maurice A. Richter, author of *The Municipalist,* replied to Fitzhugh's article with a lengthy criticism. Not only did Richter deny the alleged facts in favor of war, but he expressed his utter impatience with

[8] George Fitzhugh, "The Uses and Morality of War and Peace," in *De Bow's Review,* A.W.S., I (1866), 75–77.

such bellicose individuals as Fitzhugh, particularly in view of the problems facing the South.[9]

During the months after the settlement of Appomattox, when it appeared that Reconstruction would follow the generous lines proposed by Lincoln and Johnson, Fitzhugh professed that he accepted philosophically the results of the ordeal by battle and was prepared to co-operate with his former enemies. For all his proslavery militancy he had never actually hated his opponents and it was not surprising therefore that he came to mingle on most friendly terms with the Union officers stationed in Virginia. In fact, during 1865 Fitzhugh found remunerative employment with the erstwhile invaders in an organization peculiarly distasteful to loyal Southerners, the Freedmen's Bureau. The circumstances, however, made this connection far from discreditable to him.

The "Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands" had been created in March, 1865, by Congress to aid the former slaves who poured into the areas held by the Union forces, or remained under the most demoralized conditions in the neighborhoods which formerly had been their homes. Problems of relief, employment, sanitation, education, freedmen's contracts, land allotments, and legal questions, among many others, arose to harass the new officialdom. In September the Bureau established a special court unit to be attached to each subdistrict under an assistant superintendent of the Bureau. Each of these executives was to be aided by two agents in adjudicating all difficulties between whites and freedmen, or among the freedmen themselves, where the penalty did not exceed imprisonment at hard labor for three months or a fine of one hundred dollars. The agents were expected to assist the freedmen in drawing up contracts for the farm season and to see that all were properly and profitably employed. One agent was to

[9] "Editorial and Miscellanies," *ibid.*, 443.

be chosen by the whites, another by the freedmen. In some cases the Negro chosen as agent found it expedient not to serve due to the hostile attitude of the community.[10]

Thus it happened that Fitzhugh was chosen as one of the court agents for the Freedmen's Bureau of Richmond. He served as an associate judge of the Freedmen's Court from October 28, 1865, to the end of 1866 with T. P. A. Bibb, evidently a freedman. His interest in the plight of the Negro is suggested by an official letter in which he requested compensation for a certain freedman, John Oliver, who had regularly attended the court since its inception, preparing petitions for those without legal counsel.[11] His crowded little courtroom, with perhaps one hundred "Cushites," as he called the Negroes, in attendance as suitors, witnesses, or idlers, attracted the attention of Northern newspaper reporters, who commented on Fitzhugh's curiously persistent habit of heavy pipe smoking during the ever-informal court sessions. These Negroes, he insisted, were but grown-up children, requiring the firm paternal hand of white people like himself and he found it useful, under such circumstances, to encourage the impression among freedmen that his judicial powers were virtually unlimited.

Indeed, although we practised law in the civil courts for almost thirty years, we never had very precise notions of military law, especially of Yankee military law, and felt, whilst sitting as judge in the Freedmen's Bureau, pretty much, we suppose, as Sancho Panza felt whilst distributing justice in the island of Barratoria. We assumed that our jurisdiction was almost unlimited, and that we were bound by no system of laws, and therefore ought to decide each case according to our own notions of right and wrong.

[10] *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 136.

[11] Orders of the Richmond Freedmen's Court, October 28, 1865, to March 9, 1866; letter of T. P. A. Bibb and Fitzhugh, August 9, 1866, in Letters Received Book of the Assistant Commissioner for Virginia (1866), Freedmen's Bureau Collection (The National Archives).

This system, he observed, gave universal satisfaction.[12]

At this time the Fitzhughs lived at Camp Lee, about a mile from Richmond, which had been taken over by the Freedmen's Bureau. They enjoyed the hospitality of an imposing brick residence, originally erected by Colonel John Mayo, father-in-law of General Winfield Scott. Fitzhugh took considerable interest in his two-acre vegetable garden, tilled by a freedman, although he hoped soon to return to his own beautiful garden at Port Royal. The camp grounds had been the property of the Virginia State Agricultural Society; now they were converted into a Negro orphanage and refugee camp, the former administered by a Quaker organization. Fitzhugh seemed amused by the efforts made to educate the Negro, a program he described as incredibly naïve. What was more to the point, he thought, was that Negroes were permitted to remain idle and that Negro women were being taught that field work was improper for them. Nevertheless, these Negro "nurseries," as he called the Bureau's experiment, suggested a lesson for Southerners. The South, too, he said, would learn to institute a distinct and separate government for Negroes.

John T. Trowbridge, popular Northern novelist of juvenile fiction, while traveling during 1866 through the prostrate Confederacy, visited the Richmond Freedmen's Court where Fitzhugh presided. He was impressed by the "admirable directness" with which justice was achieved in the midst of complexities that would have embarrassed ordinary courts. Among the interesting discoveries which he made at the Richmond court was a large package of wills, drawn up in favor of slaves, "usually by their white fathers, all which had been suppressed by the legitimate heirs." He claimed to have copied one of these suppressed wills verbatim: "It is also my last will and desire that my *beloved wife* Sally Dandridge, and *my son* Harrison, and

[12] George Fitzhugh, "Camp Lee and the Freedmen's Bureau," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., II (1866), 346–55.

my daughters Charity and Julia, should be free; and it is my wish and desire for them to be emancipated hereafter, and for them to remain as free people." [13]

Conscientious Bureau officials were deeply concerned over the new social and economic problems involved in the transition of the Negro from slavery. The constant demand for Southern agricultural products from the outside world revealed a labor shortage, aggravated by the preference of many freedmen for the independence of fishing and "oystering" to the drudgery of field work; in other cases the freedman desired a small farm of his own. Besides, there was the steady post-bellum trek of the young rural Negro to the city. In some sections of Virginia public meetings of planters attempted to meet this situation by fixing the maximum monthly payment for able-bodied freedmen at five dollars; to guarantee their labor supply further, they decided to refuse renting land to freedmen and to require a recommendation from their former employers before hiring.[14] When the Virginia legislature passed a law in 1866 punishing vagrancy and idleness, it was promptly nullified by Major General Alfred H. Terry on the ground that its purpose was primarily to discriminate against the Negro.[15]

To these grave economic problems was added the burden of tense relations. At Suffolk, Virginia—and no doubt elsewhere as well—it became one of the unpardonable sins for a Negro to complain to a Yankee. This was due in part to the fact that even small court fines were beyond the financial capacity of the impoverished whites and also due to the pronounced disinclination of the latter to deal with the invader. In Caroline County, Fitzhugh's home, where the colored population, consisting largely of sharecroppers, outnumbered the whites, the local Bureau agent reported a distinctly unfriendly atmosphere, "a very distant, cold

[13] John T. Trowbridge, *A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration* (Hartford, Conn., 1868), 344. Trowbridge's italics.

[14] *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, *passim*.

[15] Fredericksburg (Va.) *New Era*, January 26, 1866.

sort of feeling—a feeling of distrust on both sides." Another agent in the tidewater area of Stafford County reported: When the president of the county board of overseers had been asked whether the county could continue feeding the poor freedmen should the Federal government cease issuing rations, the local official replied, "Not a damn bite will I give them; I would choose hell first." [16] War memories, personal sufferings, and the consciousness that an armed invader was on their soil made not a few Virginians indifferent to the problem of assisting the Negro along the difficult road to social emancipation.

Fitzhugh, as ever, was fertile in his theories regarding the freedmen's problems and, in view of his position with the Richmond Bureau, could look upon himself as somewhat of an authority. "It is a crying evil," he complained, "that negroes work too little everywhere." Emancipation in the Southern states and elsewhere, by fostering indolence, had rendered worthless the "better half of the globe." Meanwhile, he feared, the toiling millions of white laborers throughout Christendom worked too much and their labor was held too cheaply. The crucial question of the time, he thought, was: How could the Negro acquire the emulative spirit of capitalism?

> Political economy stands perplexed and baffled in presence of the negro. Capital can get no hold on him. Fashion cannot increase and multiply his wants, and make him again a slave, in the vain effort to supply artificial wants. . . . How make him work ten hours a day, whose every present want can be supplied by laboring three hours a day?

Recurring to his ante-bellum thesis that Northern wealth depended on Southern production and hence on Negro labor, he asserted that the failure to solve the freedmen labor problem meant the collapse of Northern commerce and manufacture; "in fine, the glorious feat of abolition [will]

[16] *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70.

turn out to be the saddest drama, if not the cruelest tragedy, ever enacted in presence of mankind."

With the perennial hope that Northern conservatives would recognize that their interests lay in discouraging Radical social experiments with the Negro, Fitzhugh pleaded for their support in permitting the South to deal with this race. Once more, as in earlier years, he warned that abolitionists, being Socialists at heart, would soon turn upon other forms of property than slavery, now that they had "set things to rights at the South." Northern capitalists must realize that there were splendid opportunities for subversive agitation among free laborers. Capitalism and human progress, he argued, depended upon the impoverishment of the masses, their successful exploitation by skill, capital, and governmental taxation. In familiar vein he attributed Northern wealth, particularly, to these exploitative processes:

> The laboring poor whites created all these improvements, all this wealth, yet, by popular, democratic, governmental and social arrangements, are permitted to enjoy none of them. They are nominally the freest people in the world, yet actually the most enslaved; for there, free competition, free trade, and political economy rule supreme.

These masses, he predicted, would not long be satisfied with merely nominal liberty. "Capital is the most cruel and exacting of all taskmasters, and the abolition of slavery to capital will soon become as popular a theme as the abolition of negro slavery." [17] Thus Fitzhugh anticipated the bitter labor struggles which were to accompany the new Golden Age of American capitalism, whose national energies were accelerated by the removal of Southern agrarian restraints at the capital.

By the middle of 1866 Fitzhugh was using once more the

[17] George Fitzhugh, "Freedmen and Free Men," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., I (1866), 416–20.

essay title of 1850, "What's To Be Done With the Negroes?" He contended that the South should be left alone to solve this problem and deplored the expectation that Solomons or "even Fred Douglasses" could be made of the freedmen. "We should be satisfied," he wrote, "to compel them to engage in coarse, common manual labor, and to punish them for dereliction of duty or nonfulfillment of their contracts with sufficient severity, to make the great majority of them useful, productive laborers." He suggested a tax on the income of the strong and healthy Negroes to provide a fund sufficient to support their weak, infirm, and aged; thus the whites should not be burdened by this heavy cost. A severe black code including vagrancy laws was necessary, he thought, to govern the Negro and preserve white supremacy.[18]

The ideal of a conservative democracy for the South proved ever an attractive theme despite the abolition of slavery. "It would never do," he declared, "in a society where there is a numerous inferior race, seemingly even, to degrade white citizens to a level with that race. This would invite amalgamation." Therefore, he would retain universal white male suffrage, although deploring some of the other constitutional innovations introduced during 1850–1851 in Virginia. While Negroes were to perform work pertaining to a lower caste, whites were to enjoy the loftier tasks of a privileged group. Actual emancipation of Negroes living in the midst of a white society was out of the question, he asserted, for "none but fools, or crazy fanatics, believe that possible." [19]

During the summer of 1866 Fitzhugh, acting possibly as an employee of the Freedmen's Bureau, took an extensive trip through the towns and plantations of eastern Virginia, returning with a mixture of both optimistic and pessimistic impressions. The "burnt district" of Richmond was being

[18] *Id.*, "What's To Be Done With the Negroes?" *ibid.*, 577–81.
[19] *Id.*, "Virginia—Her Past, Present and Future," *ibid.*, 178–84.

rapidly replaced by large and magnificent buildings; rents and real estate values were high. In a year, he predicted, the former capital of the Confederacy would be the most beautiful city in the Union. It was a pleasant surprise to him to find his friends and acquaintances in the most cheerful spirits, which he attributed to the beneficent results of common suffering during the war. Everywhere he saw energy and industry displayed. Although the state of indebtedness and prospective insolvency was appalling, the effects as yet were not felt, due to the Suspension Act. But the future, if not the present, was dark indeed, since the inevitable foreclosures would usher in a common ruin.

The Negro question, he repeated, was still uppermost. A scarcity of labor continued to exist despite the cessation of Negro emigration to Washington and other Northern cities. The system of Negro farm tenantry was proving unprofitable, being ruinous to both soil and improvements. Both the respect and order of the Negroes were due to fear. "We know," he wrote, "that their feelings are bitter and revengeful, and that secretly contrived murders upon the whites may any day occur." On the other hand, the whites entertained no ill feelings against the Negroes, but were resolved never to give up their farms to them, nor to grant them the suffrage. Altogether, the prospects for racial harmony were not at all encouraging.[20]

To this impoverished section he called for a return to the Spartan virtues of plain living and economy. The South must no longer remain a slave of fashion, emulating more prosperous nations. Since he regarded the cost of education as the heaviest item, he recommended that the family itself take over the instruction of small children; family tutors and expensive academies should be dispensed with, save by the well-to-do. The old log-cabin field school, which had served Fitzhugh in his youth, seemed to furnish a cheap solution to the problem of education. As for the education

[20] *Ibid.*

of girls, there appeared no necessity for training beyond the age of fourteen. De Bow expressed agreement with his contributor's attack on luxury, which he thought was well substantiated. "In regions scourged but twelve months ago by the demon of war," he wrote, "it is not difficult to-day to find all the fashions of Paris flaunted, and balls, dancing and dissipation in constant vogue." [21]

Fitzhugh's attitude to the victorious North fluctuated with the changes in Reconstruction policies. His early articles of 1866 were most ingratiating in the tone assumed towards Northern Radicals and the results of Union victory. In all normal societies, he declared, individuals were born radicals or conservatives in as equal proportions as the sexes. "Without Radicals, or, to speak more accurately, without Rationalists, society would stagnate and fall back. Without conservatives, society would be in a state of continual revolution." Faith and reason were the antinomes that sustained the moral world. Before the Reformation men reasoned too little and believed too much; hence came stagnation and despotism. Afterwards, the reverse proved true and chaos resulted. "Men soon found that Pope Luther, or Pope Calvin, or Pope Harry, were better than no pope at all." So, he hoped, North and South would find a common happy medium, each correcting the excesses of the other. From this relationship should arise new political parties, Rationalists and Conservatives, to replace the older outworn divisions. He was even willing to look upon emancipation as beneficent to the South, arguing that now the Negroes would labor for a larger class of whites, instead of being restricted to a "comparatively few large slaveholders." [22]

He attempted to justify this friendly attitude to so recent an enemy on propagandistic grounds. "We never can rise

[21] George Fitzhugh, "Shall the Spartan Virtues of the South Survive the War?" *ibid.*, A.W.S., II (1866), 145–50; *id.*, "Home Education and the Home Circle," *ibid.*, 49–53.

[22] *Id.*, "Virginia—Her Past, Present and Future," *loc. cit.*, 179–83.

from our abject and fallen condition," he explained, "so long as the North presents a compact front of opposition to us. By treating all parties at the North alike, by denouncing all, by speaking of their presence among us as a plague-spot and a vile contamination, and by repelling their immigration, we will effectually preserve their compactness, and perpetuate our own bondage." [23] In another article, "Terribly in Earnest," he deplored the tense attitudes on both sides. In time, he argued, the North would see that no single good result had come from permitting liberated blacks to die by the thousands from hunger or from crime, while whites stood by helplessly, unable to "govern and sustain them." Both sections were "too terribly in earnest" to distinguish clearly between right and wrong or to pursue a wise course. Still, he looked to the future with confidence.[24]

But the Congressional elections of 1866 by apparently granting a mandate to uncompromising Radical Reconstruction crushed the hopes of those who counted on a lenient peace. The party of Thaddeus Stevens had won. Fitzhugh wrote with deep pessimism of the "Radical and Conservative War," recurring to his ante-bellum thesis of the fanatical Puritan inheritance of New England. His mood had changed:

The American Republic is near its end. Affairs will, probably, wind up with civil war and military despotism at the North, in which the South will be reluctantly involved; and then for ages to come, the nation will be involved in continual civil war, for we are not prepared for hereditary monarchy, and have no materials out of which to construct an Established Church and a hereditary aristocracy, as props and stays to such a monarchy.[25]

[23] *Id.*, "Camp Lee and the Freedman's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 354.
[24] *Id.*, "Terribly in Earnest," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., II (1866), 172–77.
[25] *Id.*, "Impending Fate of the Country," *ibid.*, 569.

In another such article he continued in this mood, "The banner of faith went down when the South was conquered, and we expect, ere long, we shall have a Reign of Terror and a Goddess of Reason." [26] He had come to appreciate the magnanimity of President Andrew Johnson, whose leveling agrarianism he had once despised and now he could not find sufficient terms of opprobrium for the puritanical fanaticism of Thaddeus Stevens. He and his Radicals—Fitzhugh called them the "Rump Parliament"—seemed analogous to the worst aspects of seventeenth century puritanism in England. It was just such men, he believed, who emerged in times of civil commotion and revolution. Regarding the outgoing Congress of 1865–1866 Fitzhugh wrote disparagingly:

> Thad's Congress, with a few Democratic and Conservative exceptions, was as vulgar and as cruel a body as ever convened in Europe or America. Nothing saved the South from bloody decimation and general confiscation but the protecting shield of the President, and their apprehensions of that sleeping Lion, the Northern Army.[27]

He flayed the exploitative capitalistic spirit of the new Radical overlords and charged that the Federal government had now become a mere agent to collect interest for government creditors and to enact protective tariffs for the profit of Northeastern manufacturers. Ever mindful of a possible counterbalancing force to meet an extreme situation, he appealed to the agrarian and labor interest of the Northwest to unite with the South, always its best friend, against the "moneyed aristocracy of the Northeast." This was a rather interesting forecast of the titanic national struggle of 1896. "The capital that oppresses us," he declared, "is fictitious; it represents no real values; it has not, and never had, a real existence; 'tis the mere creature of legal con-

[26] *Id.*, "The Age of Reason and Radicalism," *ibid.*, 494.

[27] *Id.*, "Thad Stevens's Conscience—The Rump Parliament," *ibid.*, 466–70.

struction and of legislative and financial legerdemain." Such an oppression represented "ten times the cruelty, and twenty times the rapacity that ever Imperial Russia lorded it over abjectly enslaved Poland." [28] Fitzhugh's appeal to the farming and laboring classes was still premature, but the forces which he invoked were on the march, destined to fight the battle of a second Lost Cause.

[28] *Id.*, "The Two Aristocracies of America," *ibid.*, 461–65.

Chapter XX

PROPHET OF THE NEW SOUTH

As the critical year of 1866 ended amidst the revolutionary victory of Stevens and his Radical followers in Congress, Fitzhugh returned wearily to Port Royal where his family had preceded him several months before. His interesting—and fairly remunerative—employment with the Freedmen's Bureau had ended and the worst years of poverty lay ahead. The damaged roof of the antiquated Brockenbrough mansion remained largely unrepaired, a symbol of the spiritual lethargy that pervaded many of the townsfolk. But to Fitzhugh there was still the warmth of the family circle, for his eldest son Robert Hunter had returned uninjured from Lee's armies after a brief experience as a Union prisoner; and George Stuart had come home, too, a youthful lieutenant, who was destined in 1873 to turn to the ministry. All the children had already reached maturity: Sarah Champe, Augusta, Mariella, and Emily. Fitzhugh himself had attained his sixtieth year and had begun to taste the joys—oft repeated—of being a grandfather.[1]

During the early part of the following year, he found an opportunity to visit a considerable portion of tidewater Virginia, traveling at various times by railroad, steamboat, carriage, horseback, and finally, afoot. Amid general evidences of poverty, he was still able to discern signs of recovery and promise for the future. He was pleased to see greater agricultural diversification than had been the case

[1] Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith to the author, September 9, 1939; Anne Fitzhugh Maclean to *id.*, July 29, 1939; Skinker, *Samuel Skinker and His Descendants*, 180, 201.

before the war. Cattle and sheep of improved breeds appeared to be more numerous and pasture areas seemed larger than previously. Hogs, which in ante-bellum times had been relatively scarce because the large planters preferred buying Western pork to raising it themselves, were now abundant. Broadcloth, the badge of departed splendor, now yielded to the simple homespun of an earlier generation. The corn crop had been excellent, but the wheat harvest seemed poor. A proportionately larger number of whites than previously now labored in the fields assisted by a few teams manned by the "more industrious and trusty Negroes." The problem of food was solved in part by the abundance of oysters and fish which could be easily taken from the eastern Virginia rivers and there was considerable game available in the many wooded sections.

His observations on the freedmen were colored by an increasing racial bias, reflecting the fact that the abolition of slavery carried with it the chief institution upon which white supremacy had been based. Although he was ready to admit that the agricultural yield was proportionately almost twice that of ante-bellum days, he attributed this result to the resourcefulness of the white and the relative cheapness of free Negro labor. Again, as during his visit of 1866, he complained that Negro petty thefts and idleness, especially among the young, were increasing and that colored tenant farmers were total failures. "There never lived one single full-blooded negro," he wrote in *De Bow's Review,* "who could manage successfully all the details of a large farm. Nay, there never was a negro or North American Indian who could manage his own family." These comments were intended primarily to rebuke the alleged racial ignorance of the Radicals and their sweeping program of Reconstruction.

Just as he had formerly dwelt upon the immutable character of slavery, he now emphasized the innate inferiority of the Negro. "The natives of the two races are as different

as light and darkness; and the negro can never be properly governed and disposed of until his distinctive moral and mental nature is thoroughly investigated, comprehended and expounded." Apparently Fitzhugh was convinced as to what such investigation would prove, for he attempted to point out that in four thousand years of history, the Negro had been in immediate contact with white civilizations without dropping his primitive life. This demonstrated, he thought, the inherent inferiority of the Negro. As for the retarding influences of persecution, he argued that the Jews had been subject to even more social disadvantages and nevertheless improved along the path of intellectual achievement.[2] To Fitzhugh and his generation Africa was the Dark Continent, and the high indigenous cultures of the Negro revealed by anthropologists of a later day were unknown.

He took considerable pleasure in exploding an old abolitionist assertion that slavery was responsible for the fact that foreign immigration avoided the South. Now that freedom had arrived, he asked sardonically for signs that aliens had chosen to come below Mason and Dixon's line. Only Northerners came. These were welcome, except for the "strong-minded women and weak-minded Yankee clergy" who wandered about the South, according to Fitzhugh, making false reports and acting as an incendiary influence upon the Negro. Meanwhile, the freedmen were deserting the piedmont and mountain regions and crowding down upon the tidewater regions or upon the deep South. In many areas they thereby increased the numerical disparity between the races and raised the specter of "Africanization" in the minds of white Southerners. Fitzhugh pessimistically forecast an exodus of white workers from the South, the rise of absentee landownership, and a racial war like Santo Domingo's. "Let the proposed recon-

[2] George Fitzhugh, "Our Trip to the Country—Virginia," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., III (1867), 166–69.

struction measures be perfected," he warned in the spring of 1867, "the negroes be given the right of suffrage, and in all respects be placed on an equality with the whites, and emigration will proceed with the hurry and precipitancy of a *Sauve qui peut.*" Unlike De Bow and perhaps most white Southerners, who waited impatiently to see the Federal soldiers leave, Fitzhugh expressed a fear that their withdrawal might mean savage race riots.[3]

Not content with racial arguments alone against the Radical program, Fitzhugh had still other objections to voice. "Give farms to the Freedmen of the South," he predicted, "and in a very few years those farms will pass into the possession of the whites; unless they be entailed upon the blacks." He expressed his confidence that a free competitive regime, such as was implied in Radicalism, meant the extermination of the Negro and his property rights because of the overwhelming superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. Only some form of slavery—within the Thirteenth Amendment—would be humane to the Negro. To obliterate social distinctions between the races, similarly, would lead to the utmost suffering for the colored people. Just as in the North, he wrote, where Negroes became outcasts, paupers, and criminals under the ideals of laissez faire, so it would be with those of the South, should equalitarian ideas prevail. The Negroes would be confined to the "most loathsome and least lucrative employments and spend half their time in prisons, work-houses, and poor-houses." [4]

When the time came for the withdrawal of the Freedmen's Bureau and of Federal assistance to the Negro, the South must set up a "poor house system" in its fullest sense to save the Negro from starving, insisted Fitzhugh. Since all governments were under obligation to support those who

[3] *Id.*, "Exodus from the South," *ibid.*, 352–56; *id.*, "Commerce, War and Civilization," *ibid.*, A.W.S., II (1866), 256–62.

[4] *Id.*, "The Negro Imbroglio—Farms for the Freedmen," *ibid.*, A.W.S., III (1867), 518–22; *id.*, "Cui Bono?—The Negro Vote," *ibid.*, A.W.S., IV (1867), 289–92.

could not support themselves, compulsion was necessary to carry out this duty. Hence arose the necessity of an adequate system of controls over the Negro.[5] Thus Fitzhugh argued for the revival of the older restraints of slavery in the fashionable dress of a liberal institution.

Against the liberal theories of the Radicals, he brought out the Malthusian threat of overpopulation, warning that competitive society had made the problem of excess population the "master evil of the times." Hitherto in history, governments had always been solicitous in promoting an increased population; now under modern competition all this had changed. Excessive population, inevitably accompanied by crime, pauperism, and gross social and economic inequalities, had developed with the abolition of serfdom and slavery. Russia and the South, hitherto without population problems, were now the most recent accessions to the realms of competitive society and destined to share their dubious blessings. To meet this situation he recommended his favorite ante-bellum remedy, a system of small-property entails, following the model of ancient Judea, to stabilize the family institution and property tenure. "When property ceases to be transferable by trick, or fraud, or luck," he declared, "all will go to work, and there will be no more millionaires or paupers, and few criminals." Evidently he did not propose any direct restraints on population itself, believing that feudal principles, by providing security, would mitigate this problem.[6]

Occasionally his bitterness against the new regime took on an uncompromising form. He asserted defiantly on one occasion, "Cruel, persecuting, revengeful, envious radicalism cannot mar the beauty and fertility of our fields, nor send rigor to our soft and genial climate, nor reverse our seasons, nor crush out our just pride and self-respect, nor

[5] *Id.*, "The Poor House System," *ibid.*, 83–86.

[6] *Id.*, "Excess of Population and Increase of Crime and Pauperism," *ibid.*, A.W.S., III (1867), 134–38.

debase our characters, nor suspend our industry." [7] Sardonically he wrote in another article:

> We are in Rome and mean to do as Rome does. We know our abolition catechism by heart; on a pinch, could repeat it backwards. We are quite an adept in Progressive Christianity, for we know that the Yankees, (our pastors and our masters,) are "the smartest nation in creation," and that by table rappings, keep as well posted in the change of times and fashions in the world above and the world beneath, as in the state of the markets in this little contemptible globe of ours.[8]

He saw a ray of hope in the future of the South. Abolitionism had destroyed the national equilibrium between the North and South, but economic factors were in operation which should once more restore the former balance. Before the war the canals and railroads of the Northeastern states and Canada had diverted trade away from New Orleans and the deep South, thus arresting the development of reciprocal intersectional trade. Soon, however, the South would have her own canals and railroads reaching and intersecting the great Northwest. Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans would become the entrepôts of this cotton, rice, and sugar trade and the business of Northern cities would be diverted to the South.

As in ante-bellum days he wished to see a series of Southern states, each with the essential diversified activities of a social and economic character requisite for nationalism. The Civil War had not ended his hope of preserving Virginians, Carolinians, and other such loyalties of an earlier age. He loathed the doctrines of "consolidated government" as represented by the Radicals and expected that the Federal structure of the Union would ultimately revive. To him the forces of nineteenth century centralization had always represented the cloven hoof of the enemy. The local tradi-

[7] *Id.*, "Still Life in the Country," *ibid.*, 535–36.

[8] *Id.*, "Excess of Population and Increase of Crime and Pauperism," *loc. cit.*, 135.

tions of the state governments, rather than the legal formulas of state rights, seemed to possess genuine vitality, an *esprit de corps* destined to thwart despotic centralizing elements, Congressional or monarchical.[9]

As Negro suffrage and other Radical plans were carried into the South at bayonet point, Fitzhugh described the pessimistic atmosphere of tidewater Virginia. In a letter of September 17, 1867, in *De Bow's Review*—now his only literary outlet—he mentioned the "indecision, confusion, and chaos" that ruled the eastern counties as the nightmare of race war seemed on the point of realization. Men lived from day to day, disinclined to plan for the future because of the fear of wholesale land confiscations by the Radicals in power. Many of the homes destroyed by war remained unrebuilt. River traffic appeared at a standstill amidst the continued exodus of white citizens.[10]

In Virginia the Reconstruction convention elected in 1867 by a limited franchise enacted a travesty of constitutional government. Freedmen, scarcely qualified by slavery for statesmanship, together with certain irresponsible "carpetbaggers" afforded unsavory spectacles of street brawls, and many appeared armed on the floor of the convention. Huge expense appropriations were obtained by the delegates before their adjournment. Conservative members protesting against this situation were expelled by the convention.

The situation in Port Royal and Caroline County, as reflected in politics, was particularly depressing to Fitzhugh. While there was a white majority of 12,658 in the state registered under the Reconstruction law, Caroline County had a colored majority of 56; in the local vote of Port Royal on the delegate to the Virginia Convention, the Radicals, largely freedmen, mustered 194 votes to 192 for the Con-

[9] *Id.*, "Monarchy in America," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., III (1867), 273–78.

[10] *Id.*, "Cui Bono?—The Negro Vote," *loc. cit.*, 292.

servatives.[11] Never depressed for long, however, Fitzhugh wrote shortly thereafter that the results of certain Northern state elections, indicating a strong conservative trend, promised the deliverance of the South from Negro rule.[12]

That year a severe personal blow descended unexpectedly upon Fitzhugh. De Bow, genial editor of the *Review*, suddenly died on February 27, 1867. While on a journey to the bedside of his brother, B. F. De Bow, at Elizabeth, New Jersey, he had contracted a cold which developed subsequently into pleurisy. Born in 1820, he was only forty-seven, but had lived an extremely full life comparable to that of a much older man. Had he continued to live he might have become a leader in the rise of the New South, for his energies had always been directed towards the economic and social diversification of his section. Thereafter *De Bow's Review* appeared only sporadically until 1870, save for a brief revival during 1879–1880, leaving Fitzhugh without his chief literary vehicle.

During 1868 Fitzhugh exerted his personal influence with the Federal authorities at Washington in behalf of his lifelong friend, Robert Hudgin, clerk of the Caroline County court, who had run afoul of the Reconstruction laws. During the war Hudgin had invested his savings in property at the White Sulphur Springs of Fauquier County, but the Union campaign of 1863 had destroyed this health resort; almost completely destitute he had returned to Bowling Green in 1865 to resume the clerkships of the County and Superior courts of Caroline which he had held with a brief intermission since 1831. Cheerfully he had opened the court session in August, 1865, with a publicly expressed hope, "God save this good old Commonwealth, and speedily restore her to her ancient rights in this once glorious Union." A hearty response had greeted this senti-

11 Fredericksburg *News*, October 7, 24, 1867.

12 George Fitzhugh, "The Return of Good Feeling," in *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., IV (1867), 557–62.

ment, suggestive of the common desire for the "good old days." [13] But Hudgin's hope for reconciliation was suddenly ended by the Radical Reconstruction laws of 1867 requiring that all voters and election officials take the "ironclad oath," swearing that they had never given voluntary aid or held office under the Confederacy. The aged clerk refused to take this Test Oath and faced exclusion from the office he had held for so many years.

Fitzhugh intervened at once with the secretary of war, General John M. Schofield, in a letter of April 17, 1868. He pleaded the benevolence of Hudgin and his indispensability to the county because of his intimate knowledge of the circumstances and affairs of its citizens. "Before the war," explained Fitzhugh, "he was always very national in his politics. During and since the war he has ever been polite and attentive to all Federal officials." This commendation, he may have thought, should appeal to Yankee vanity. "He lost his all by the war, has a large family, and is growing old." With this Fitzhugh expressed his hope that Hudgin would be retained.[14] Whether this letter alone produced the desired effect is not clear, but at any rate the court clerk was soon restored to his former duties, holding this position until 1892. By successive acts of 1868 and 1871, Congress modified the Test Oath to a simple pledge to support and defend the Constitution and the Union.

During 1869–1870 Fitzhugh wrote frequently for *Lippincott's Magazine* of Philadelphia. Joshua B. Lippincott had published many a proslavery work in ante-bellum days despite his Union politics, and during 1868 he had begun his *Magazine* with the expressed hope that the South would obtain a fair hearing in its pages. The large circulation of the journal assured Fitzhugh considerable publicity for his ideas; but Northern readers were to be less tolerant of his

[13] Fredericksburg *New Era*, August 18, 1865.

[14] Fitzhugh to John M. Schofield, April 17, 1868, Department of War Records, Military District No. 1, Document File F–97–1868 (The National Archives).

antidemocratic views. Fitzhugh, on his part, usually expressed himself cautiously on subjects tending to sectional controversy. Lippincott, himself, though professing disagreement with many of Fitzhugh's ideas, wrote of his new contributor, "Mr. Fitzhugh's papers, even when most paradoxical, are calculated to convey information and stimulate thought."

One of the Virginian's articles which attracted wide attention in the press was "The Freedman and His Future," printed in October, 1869. Particularly interesting to Northern readers were his comments on the increased productivity of the freedman:

> In our neighborhood, for the last two years, a force of negroes diminished by more than a third has produced more than a force a third larger before the war. Negroes in the South do not now feign sickness and work lazily, as when slaves. The fear of losing employment is a better stimulant to labor than was the fear of bodily punishment. The falling off of the aggregate crops of the South is sufficiently accounted for by the want of capital to employ labor, without charging the negroes with unwillingness to labor.

Tongue in cheek, he added:

> I assure you, Mr. Editor, that our negroes will be more profitable to their employers than were slaves to their masters. . . . We have adopted the high-pressure system of free competitive society and exchanged hickories for hunger.

He repeated his program for the Negro that he had outlined in *De Bow's Review*. Left alone, the South would solve its problem. "In time, a relation like that of patron and client in ancient Rome will grow up between whites and blacks." He was even ready to predict that the Negro-dominated legislatures of the South would be sufficiently wise to enact vagrancy laws in order to compel all, white and black, to work. Now that the Negroes had given up the hope of "the mule and forty acres of land," more conserva-

tive results should follow. But there must be no nonsense about Negro education. "Now, I verily believe," said Fitzhugh, "there is not one decently-informed philanthropist in America who does not know that a literary education unfits a full-blooded negro for field-work or other servile offices, prepares him for no other occupation, and thus deprives him of all means of support except theft and robbery." [15]

This awakened various reactions. Lippincott, while dissenting from Fitzhugh's views on Negro education, commended the article as a correct picture of the Virginia scene, but not applicable to the deep South. The New York *Commercial Advertiser* hailed the paper as proof that the South was now convinced that the Negro in freedom would work. It was particularly gratifying to the editor that the refutation of an ante-bellum thesis should come from "a distinguished Virginia writer," George Fitzhugh, who had devoted himself for so long in the past to prove that slavery was essential to a healthy form of society.[16] In *Lippincott's Magazine,* itself a protagonist of Negro education, William R. Hooper, replied to the article in "Shall He Be Educated?" After summarizing the results of Hampton Institute and the Peabody Fund, among other agencies in advancing the freedman, Hooper remarked challengingly, "We care not to ask Mr. Fitzhugh whether Frederick Douglass would best employ the talents God has given him as a laborer in the fields, or as a laborer on a newspaper in Western New York, helping to mould public opinion." [17]

Fitzhugh quickly struck back at his critics. To the editor of the New York *Commercial Advertiser* he denied that his writings were marked by any genuine inconsistency.

[15] *Id.,* "The Freedman and His Future," in *Lippincott's Magazine,* IV (1869), 436–39.

[16] New York *Commercial Advertiser,* September 28, 1869.

[17] William R. Hooper, "Shall He Be Educated? A Reply to 'The Freedman and His Future,'" in *Lippincott's Magazine,* IV (1869), 671–74.

I accept the situation. I am entirely reconciled to negro suffrage and negro legal and political equality; social relations will regulate themselves, and capital and skill will regulate industrial relations. We of the South wish to be friends with the North. We are trying to conciliate her, and to attract immigration, skill, and capital from the North. . . . For my part, from the bottom of my heart I adopt the President's motto, "Let there be peace."

As for Hooper's article Fitzhugh replied with racial arguments, which he deemed unassailable, that education unfitted a Negro for his natural tasks. "To tell us that a bright mulatto, Fred Douglass, edits a paper, is as good as an admission that full-blooded negroes are too stupid to make any use of literary attainments." Like other racialists—Fitzhugh had now joined their ranks—he assumed that any Negro who achieved distinction could not be a "full-blooded" member of that race. He cited experiments in Negro education at Hilton Head and Fortress Monroe, Virginia, to prove that educating the colored people meant insubordination, anarchy, and ultimately starvation.[18] Negro leaders like Booker T. Washington might readily affirm that the freedman required an industrial education for the present far more than he needed a classical training, but Fitzhugh would have denied all but a permanent status of manual laborer for the Negro.

Even more significant than his articles on the freedmen was his paper, "Land Monopoly," published in *Lippincott's Magazine* in September, 1869. On various previous occasions he had argued that land monopoly by a few was essential to civilization, for common ownership of lands or numerous small proprietorships extinguished all incentive to labor beyond one's immediate necessities. Now he recognized the full implications of his theory for big business.

[18] George Fitzhugh, "The Freedman and His Future: A Rejoinder," *ibid.*, V (1870), 191–97.

Capitalism, like slavery, once a necessary evil, had become a blessing!

> My sole object is to teach men that land monopoly—or, to speak more accurately, the monopoly of property, or capital, by the few, and the consequent subjection of the many to the dominion, taxation and exploitation of these few—is not an evil, as generally esteemed, but the greatest of human blessings, because it is the only means of begetting, sustaining and advancing civilization.

Nor were millionaires any longer to be regarded as vulgar and parasitical; for he asserted, "Millionaires, without intending it, are the benefactors of mankind . . . and one of them with a hundred clerks in his employ, will do more business, and do it better and more cheaply, than a thousand independent petty, vulgar shopkeepers." Possibly, Fitzhugh now recognized heroic virtues in the feudal ideals of monopoly capitalism. At any rate, he reaffirmed his position in strong terms, "It is the dominion of capital over labor that begets, sustains and advances civilization."

He was even willing to admit, despite his former arguments to the contrary, that the condition of the free laborer was infinitely superior to that of the slave, unless the free worker was a "worthless, improvident being." But he stopped short at the Negro, insisting that his racial predilections for an improvident life made it impossible for the Negro to enter the golden portals of capitalist society, save as an individual subject to special protective measures. "The whites," he pointed out, "are ever *discontented,* rivalrous, emulative, rapacious, ambitious, proud, provident, selfish, jealous, aspiring, and accumulative." Against such a race the Negro could not bear competition. Because the Negro had never been able to develop the property institutions of the white, particularly those arising from land monopoly, he had remained uncivilized.[19] Thus did science refute politics regarding the Negro's future.

[19] *Id.*, "Land Monopoly," *ibid.*, IV (1869), 286–91.

This idea of land monopoly was attacked by a large pro-labor newspaper, the New York *World,* as an exploded theory. The editor argued that the tendency of the times was towards the destruction and dispersion of all monopolies. Joint stock concerns, with exclusive privileges, were being daily shorn of their peculiar powers and could sustain themselves only "on the strength and genius of single men." The Stewarts, Vanderbilts, and Fisks owed nothing to the fostering care of special laws, but everything to their own abilities. So had come to be the case for land tenure since feudal protections had been removed.[20] But if Fitzhugh were wrong, the editor of the *World* was equally so, since his analysis of the postwar Robber Barons was completely lacking in accuracy and realism. The new era of special privilege, fostered by the state legislatures and municipal councils, had indubitably arrived.

This editorial comment aroused Fitzhugh and he insisted that his theory had been misunderstood. To simplify his position, he expanded his theory of monopoly in words which are particularly striking since they show to what extent the Virginian's hatred of the capitalistic spirit had disappeared:

> In the struggle of life, the war of wits, a few monopolize the lands, and all other capital that grows out of land, directly or indirectly. These few institute what is called "slavery to capital," the greatest of human blessings, because it begets civilization, and renders the earth a hundred times more productive than it can ever be where all lands are held in common, multiplies population a hundred fold, and places the most abject slave of capital, the poorest laborer, in the enjoyment of more comforts and luxuries than were dreamed of by savage princes.

Recognizing the new capitalism which had reached maturity during the Reconstruction era, Fitzhugh pointed out that never in history had accumulations of capital been so extensive. He praised such mammoth capitalistic enter-

[20] New York *World,* August 31, 1869.

prises as the new transcontinental railroad and the Suez Canal. Never before, he said, had capital exercised so complete a dominion over labor, yet the relations between them were harmonious. Still, he was ready to endorse trade unions since these would act as a check against employers who would abuse the unlimited powers in their hands. "The war between Capital and Labor is evidence of a healthy state of society. When it ceases, despotism, ignorance and pauperism will supervene," he wrote.

In the South, Fitzhugh had apparently lost much, if not most, of his former following. The article on land monopoly stirred some newspaper comment, but it was unsympathetic. The Alexandria (Va.) *Gazette,* once friendly to Fitzhugh's ideas, now wrote caustically that he had received "new light on the science of Sociology" and quoted the Virginian's comments on the rapacity of the white race. "But we do not wonder. With all *extremists,* the pendulum swings, after awhile, as far in one direction, as it did in precisely the other direction." [21] This editorial was reprinted by the Fredericksburg *News,* Fitzhugh's earliest admirer of the Southern press, apparently with approval.

His connections with *Lippincott's Magazine* ceased abruptly in 1870 and one looks in vain for many later articles in the periodicals of either the North or the South. Symbolically, what may have been the last article of his life dealt with the promise of the South's future. Entitled "The Great Central Belt of Trade and Commerce," it appeared in the *Southern Magazine* of Baltimore during September, 1872. The article was conceived in that same prophetic spirit of the New South that later brought fame to Henry W. Grady, editor of the Atlanta *Constitution* and ardent proponent of an economically diversified South. Fitzhugh now clearly saw the co-operative role that the New South was to play in a unified American nation:

[21] Fitzhugh, "The Freedman and His Future: A Rejoinder," *loc. cit., passim.*

There is a section of country contained within a line drawn from St. Louis to Baltimore on the North, and one from Memphis to Norfolk on the South, that when art has come to the aid of nature, combines more advantages for constructing an immense and world-wide domestic trade and foreign commerce than any other belt of country in the world of like extent. . . .

When the various railroads now constructing or which are contemplated, are finished through this great central belt of country, they will by the trade and travel which they accommodate vitally interest three-fourths of our America in the continuance of the Union. . . . Community of interests and like social and industrial systems will bind us together in the future.[22]

Thus Fitzhugh had solved for himself the riddle of the house divided.

But the sands of time were running short for Fitzhugh. A lifelong insomnia affliction was increasingly aggravated by other ailments of advancing age which kept him to his bed for long intervals. He became increasingly inactive despite the poverty of his situation. One by one his five daughters left the parental hearth to join their husbands in homes far distant from Port Royal. Robert Hunter Fitzhugh had gone with his wife to Frankfort, Kentucky, to supervise construction work on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, thus increasing his father's loneliness. Finally, in October, 1877, Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh, who had been her husband's constant companion for almost fifty years, died.

The family circle gone, Fitzhugh left for Frankfort in 1878, living for over a year with his son. Despite his ill-health he found many enjoyable moments with his grandchildren, taking pleasure in long walks with them and proudly reading the Latin classics in the original to the ad-

[22] *Id.*, "The Great Central Belt of Trade and Commerce," in *Southern Magazine* (Baltimore), XI (1872), 270–75.

miring youngsters. One granddaughter recalled long afterwards, "I remember him as a handsome old gentleman in the classic style, profile, manner and all. . . . He was a man of even temper and perfect self control, full of quiet kindness and as absent-minded as any professor was ever supposed to be." [23] His son Robert Hunter was to show a deep sympathy for the plight of the newly-emancipated Negro. In 1893 he became one of the chief founders of an industrial school for Negro orphans at Lexington, Kentucky.

Sometime in 1880 Fitzhugh moved once more westward, this time to Huntsville, Walker County, Texas, where his daughter Mariella was married to Marcellus Foster, a wounded Confederate veteran from Tennessee. Texas had not yet recovered completely from the war and Reconstruction problems, and the Fosters were poor, like their neighbors. Here Fitzhugh suffered severely from incessant coughing paroxysms and at seventy-four he became almost blind.[24] Still he found pleasure in one source at least—his grandson Marcellus E. Foster, destined to become the crusading editor of the Houston *Press,* a Scripps-Howard newspaper.

But to his physical sufferings soon came merciful release. On July 29, 1881, George Fitzhugh died, unknown to the new generation that had arisen since Appomattox. In Virginia an obscure newspaper, the West Point *Star,* furnished editorial copy to its journalistic colleagues by a brief but vague mention that a subscriber's father had died. "Mr. Fitzhugh," wrote the editor, "was a much-honoured *littérateur,* a scientific writer in the years gone by of De Bow's *Review* and other leading magazines and author of several works of great interest." [25] Fitzhugh's daughter, Champe, now Mrs. Charles P. Thornton of West Point, who furnished this information to the *Star,* evidently saved her father from oblivion.

[23] Anne Fitzhugh Maclean to the author, July 29, 1939.
[24] Marcellus E. Foster to *id.,* September 5, 1938.
[25] Quoted in Fredericksburg *News,* August 15, 1881.

CRITICAL ESSAY ON AUTHORITIES

Manuscript Sources

The most valuable single source for Fitzhugh's life is the huge George Frederick Holmes Collection, divided between the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and Duke University, Durham, N.C., with the preponderance of material at the latter. The Duke collection, which includes Holmes's original correspondence, memoranda, diaries, and letter books, contains valuable information on the contemporary literary scene in the South, the Virginia political setting, as well as copies of Fitzhugh's letters of the 1850's addressed to Holmes. Most of the Library of Congress collection of Holmes letters represents the originals of items included in the letter books possessed by Duke University.

Several interesting original letters of Fitzhugh were found in The National Archives, Washington, D.C., under various headings: Files of the Attorney General, Freedmen's Bureau Collection, and Department of War Records. These pertain to the years 1857–1858 and 1868. Dr. Philip M. Hamer, Chief of the Division of Reference, deserves credit for discovering these letters amidst collections which had not yet been completely inventoried. Departmental account books throw additional light on Fitzhugh's status. The Robert M. T. Hunter Collection at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, contains several Fitzhugh letters, but these have already been published by Charles H. Ambler in the American Historical Association, *Annual Report,* 1916, II (Washington, 1918). Despite the havoc wrought among the Caroline County, Va., records by the Civil War, considerable local documents of importance were gleaned from the official state records at the Virginia State Library, Richmond. These are largely Fitzhugh's petitions to the legislature and county real estate records.

Some of Fitzhugh's grandchildren aided materially in the search for original documents. Among these were Marcellus E. Foster, editor emeritus of the Houston *Press,* W. Fitzhugh

Quesenberry, Mary Brockenbrough Fitzhugh Smith, Anne Fitzhugh Maclean, and E. Fitzhugh Shapter, who furnished some very useful family memoranda, personal reminiscences, and a photograph of George Fitzhugh. No conditions were attached to such assistance which would give this book an authorized flavor.

Government Documents: National and State

The most useful set of official documents consulted in studying the influence of the proslavery propagandists upon national politics proved to be the *Congressional Globe,* 46 vols. (Washington, 1833–1873), for the years 1850–1861. Because of its lack of an adequate index, it was necessary to resort to the arduous plan of turning pages until the debates assumed a sectional character on the slavery issue, but the results of this method were gratifying. It was thus possible to determine the degree to which Fitzhugh and the militants attracted national attention and exerted an influence upon statesmen North and South. Quoted extracts from newspapers, journals, books, and public addresses furnished invaluable clues to other relevant material. The common Congressional practice of inserting undelivered speeches and subsequently revising those that were given made it desirable, whenever possible, to compare the texts appearing in the *Globe* with those of the originals in the various separate collections of speeches available for men like William H. Seward, Charles Sumner, Eli Thayer, and others.

Particularly informative material on certain aspects of domestic slavery as well as upon the foreign slave trade was afforded by the significant James Buchanan official correspondence in *House Executive Documents,* 36 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. IV. The same source (Document No. 84, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. XII), embracing "Expenditures on account of Private Land Claims in California," contains valuable information on the California Land Claims question in which Fitzhugh was involved. In a study of Southern public opinion on slavery, the reaction of juries is a useful indicator of local attitudes. By utilizing the *American Digest* [1658–1896], 14 vols. (Century ed., St. Paul, Minn., 1897–1899), with its excellent subject index, it was possible to locate the contemporary Federal cases dealing with slavery; these data, when supplemented by local newspapers and other sources, afforded a fairly trustworthy picture of public opinion.

Confidential data of value for the Virginia slavery issue can

frequently be gleaned from Henry W. Flournoy (ed.), *Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836–1869,* 11 vols. (Richmond, 1893), XI. The state legislative record, *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (Richmond, 1776——), is as meager in detail as its counterpart in most American states of the time, but has considerable value when used in conjunction with other contemporary material. Since the slavery issue was a fundamental one behind the struggle over sectional representation in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850–1851, there is very relevant material in the *New Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, July 31, 1851* (Richmond, 1851). This edition contains a detailed commentary. Virginia laws pertaining to Negro slavery have been conveniently collected in June Purcell Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia* (Richmond, 1936). Among the valuable statistical reports for Virginia and the South is James D. B. De Bow (ed.), *Statistical View of the United States: Census of 1850* (Washington, 1854).

Published Writings of George Fitzhugh

All writings of Fitzhugh fall within the period 1849–1872 and appear in various forms, frequently unsigned. His *Sociology for the South; or, The Failure of Free Society* (Richmond, 1854) and *Cannibals All! or, Slaves without Masters* (Richmond, 1857) are the most significant of his early works. Both deal with British industrialism as the representative of "free society" and the social evils of liberalism. The second volume is largely a commentary on the first, with some incidental autobiographical data of value, including several of Fitzhugh's letters. *Sociology for the South* contains a convenient appendix of his earlier pamphlets, *Slavery Justified* (Fredericksburg, Va., 1850) and *What Shall Be Done with the Free Negroes?* (Richmond, 1850).

Between 1855 and 1867 well over a hundred articles by Fitzhugh were published in *De Bow's Review* (New Orleans, 1846–1864, 1866–1870, 1879–1880). Although the *Review* contains a table of contents which usually identifies the author, in too many cases the reader must discover it from other keys, such as internal evidence and references to the article elsewhere. The editor's comments are frequently appended, suggesting the close relationship between Fitzhugh and the policy of the *Review.* Other proslavery articles in this journal, such as those by William Grayson, Edmund Ruffin, Archibald Roane, George Fred-

erick Holmes, and De Bow himself, are well worth examining for the light they cast upon Fitzhugh's ideas. The "Editorial Miscellany" column of the *Review* frequently contains valuable biographical information on the Virginian.

Most difficult for the uninitiated is the gathering of Fitzhugh's scores—perhaps hundreds—of unsigned editorials which appeared in the Richmond *Examiner* for 1854–1856 and the Richmond *Enquirer* for 1855–1857. Here internal evidence and occasional clues from Fitzhugh's letters are the sole guide. Fortunately, the peculiarities of his style, especially his tendency to repeat himself verbatim, are such that the task can be done with some confidence by those familiar with his other writings. Frequently during the fifties signed letters of Fitzhugh appeared in these Richmond newspapers. The editorials are of unusual importance, not primarily because of their character, since they are similar to his articles in *De Bow's Review,* but because of their extensive circulation, reaching the critical eyes of Northern men like Sumner, Abraham Lincoln, William Lloyd Garrison, James R. Doolittle, Henry Wilson, and many others of note who regarded the extreme sentiments of the editorials as typical of the South.

Scattered articles for the dates indicated in the footnotes appear in the *Southern Literary Messenger* (Richmond, 1834–1864), the Fredericksburg (Va.) *News, Lippincott's Magazine* (Philadelphia, 1868–1915), and the *Southern Magazine* (Baltimore, 1868–1875). The New York *Day Book* undoubtedly contains several papers by Fitzhugh, but the surviving fragments of this journal have not as yet revealed any which might be positively identified as the Virginian's. Certain miscellaneous letters appear in the various newspapers mentioned in the footnotes on the dates specified.

Proslavery Writings

Chapter III of this volume affords what is substantially an annotated bibliography of the proslavery militants during the decade preceding the Civil War. Representative collections of proslavery essays appear in E. N. Elliott (ed.), *Cotton Is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments* (Augusta, Ga., 1860) and *Pro-Slavery Arguments as Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States* (Charleston, 1852). Among the most significant proslavery volumes were: James D. B. De Bow, *The Interest in Slavery of the Southern Non-Slaveholder*

(Charleston, 1860); George S. Sawyer, *Southern Institutes* (Philadelphia, 1859); John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery* (Natchez, Miss., 1852); Iveson L. Brookes, *A Defense of the South against the Reproaches and Incroachments of the North* (Hamburg, S.C., 1850); William J. Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave, Chicora and Other Poems* (Charleston, 1856); Henry Hughes, *A Treatise on Sociology* (Philadelphia, 1854); B. F. Stringfellow, *Negro Slavery No Evil* (Boston, 1855); John H. Van Evrie, *Negroes and Negro "Slavery"* (New York, 1861); Albert T. Bledsoe, *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery* (Philadelphia, 1856); William A. Smith, *Lectures on the Philosophy and Practice of Slavery* (Nashville, Tenn., 1856); Thornton Stringfellow, *Slavery: Its Origins, Nature, and History* (Alexandria, Va., 1860); and George D. Armstrong, *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery* (New York, 1857).

Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals

The most valuable single newspaper source revealing the public activities of Fitzhugh and life at Port Royal is undoubtedly the Fredericksburg *News* for 1849–1878. The *News* made a special effort to hold its Port Royal subscribers by covering local affairs thoroughly. As yet, newspaper bibliographies such as *Gregory's,* prepared by the Library of Congress, and Virginia finding lists have uncovered but two issues of the short-lived Port Royal (Va.) *Times* and even these have again been misplaced. Next in importance for the biographer and local historian is the Fredericksburg *Recorder* and the Richmond newspapers for the period 1830–1870, especially the *Examiner,* the *Enquirer,* the *Republican and General Advertiser,* the *Virginia Herald,* and the *Republican Sentinel.* Fitzhugh's personal con nection, already noted, with the *Examiner* and the *Enquirer,* make these papers of double importance; both were extremely active in Virginia and national politics.

During the 1850's special attention was devoted to the writings of Fitzhugh and the proslavery militants in the Boston *Liberator,* the New York *Herald,* the New York *Daily Tribune,* the Charleston *Mercury,* the Springfield *Illinois State Journal,* the Washington *Daily National Intelligencer,* and the Washington *National Era.* The *Liberator* and the *Tribune,* because of their policy of reprinting lengthy extracts from proslavery writings and activities, are rich sources of information on the editorial policies and attitudes of many now inaccessible Southern

newspapers. The *Illinois State Journal,* Lincoln's organ, reflects the interest of this famous American in the ideas of Fitzhugh and the proslavery school, especially during 1856. The most valuable account of Fitzhugh's New Haven visit appears in the New Haven *Daily Palladium* for March, 1855.

Practically every important proslavery writer of the 1850's is represented in *De Bow's Review,* the chief organ of Southern militancy in every sphere. Its editor considered no pamphlet in the cause of slavery too insignificant for a literary notice. The *Southern Quarterly Review* (Charleston, 1842–1857), while under the editorship of William Gilmore Simms, was another mighty engine of sectional interests. On the other hand, the *Southern Literary Messenger* covers the less militant defenders of slavery, although occasionally it printed articles by Fitzhugh and Holmes. The philosophic implications of the proslavery argument received frequent attention in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York, 1818–1930), and this journal reflected the inner split of the church over slavery.

Biographies and Memoirs

As yet the only other published biography of Fitzhugh is the brochure by Harvey Wish, *George Fitzhugh, Conservative of the Old South* (*Southern Sketches,* No. 11), edited by Joseph D. Eggleston (Charlottesville, Va., 1938). This is now definitely supplanted by the present work and retains only the merit of brevity. Family sources were drawn upon for the biographic article on Fitzhugh in *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography,* 7 vols. (New York, 1887–1900). The *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Richmond, 1893——) contains numerous indexed references to Fitzhugh and his family. Particularly indispensable to the student for this information is Earl G. Swem (comp.), *Virginia Historical Index,* 2 vols. (Roanoke, Va., 1934–1936), which is a key to the biographical, genealogical, legislative, and historical data of the leading journals on Virginia. Of the various printed works consulted, those by Moncure D. Conway throw the most intimate light upon Fitzhugh's career; these include his *Addresses and Reprints, 1850–1907* (Boston, 1907), *Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* (New York, 1892), and *Autobiography,* 2 vols. (Boston, 1904). Another brief but intimate account appears in John P. Foote, *Memoirs of the Life of Samuel E. Foote* (Cincinnati, 1860). Further biographical data appear in Marshall Wingfield,

A History of Caroline County (Richmond, 1924), and especially in Thomas K. Skinker, *Samuel Skinker and His Descendants* (St. Louis, 1923).

At least three unpublished Master's theses and a Doctor's dissertation dealing with Fitzhugh exist. Because of the lack of a clearinghouse for this type of material, the duplication of effort involved is unusual in extent. Most useful from a biographical standpoint, because of its extensive newspaper sources and personal investigation, is Mary Frances Baldwin, "The Social Theories of George Fitzhugh" (M.A. thesis, University of Texas, 1933). A later study, Floyd Jared Brook, "George Fitzhugh, A Study in Ante-Bellum Southern Thought" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1937), covers somewhat less ground but includes an interesting comparative treatment of the subject against the contemporary intellectual background. The social theories of Fitzhugh are given the technical treatment of the sociologist in Arthur H. Woodworth, "Two Early American Sociologists" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1935). An unpublished doctoral dissertation on Fitzhugh, not yet released, has been prepared by Winnie L. Duncan at the University of North Carolina, but the writer has been unable to consult the work at this stage.

Among other biographies of value in this study, few have proved as informative as Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809–1858,* 2 vols. (Boston, 1928). Beveridge has clearly noted the influence of the proslavery writings on Lincoln's career, and in many instances recognized the bearing of Fitzhugh's ideas upon the slavery controversy. Nelson M. Blake, *William Mahone of Virginia* (Richmond, 1935), has some intimate information on Port Royal and Caroline County during Fitzhugh's day. Avery O. Craven's biography, *Edmund Ruffin, Southerner; A Study in Secession* (New York, 1932), deals with both economic and political aspects of the Virginia scene with some attention to the proslavery writers. The background of Fitzhugh's Washington experience in Attorney General Black's office is best described in William N. Brigance, *Jeremiah Sullivan Black, a Defender of the Constitution and the Ten Commandments* (Philadelphia, 1934).

Other useful biographies for the Fitzhugh background are W. D. Weatherford, *James Dunwoody Brownson De Bow* (*Southern Sketches,* No. 3), edited by Joseph D. Eggleston (Charlottesville, Va., 1935); Eugene T. Mudge, *The Social Philosophy*

of John Taylor of Caroline (New York, 1939); Kate M. Rowland, *The Life of George Mason,* 2 vols. (New York, 1892); Catherine Gilbertson, *Harriet Beecher Stowe* (New York, 1937); William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln: The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, 1908?); Henry C. Whitney, *Lincoln the Citizen* (New York, 1908); John W. Dubose, *Life and Times of William Lowndes Yancey* (Birmingham, Ala., 1892); and Ralph V. Harlow, *Gerrit Smith: Philanthropist and Reformer* (New York, 1939).

Among the memoirs which were particularly serviceable for the biography were: John G. Nicolay and John Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works,* 2 vols. (New York, 1894); Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, *My Day: Reminiscences* (New York, 1909); Edward L. Pierce, *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner,* 4 vols. (Boston, 1893); and L. Maria Child, *Letters of Lydia Maria Child* (Boston, 1883).

Histories and Monographs

For the entire proslavery movement the most extensive bibliography up to date appears in William S. Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1935). This volume is particularly useful from the standpoint of political theory, but the role of various determinant historical forces is less evident. Students of American intellectual history, as well as specialists on the ante-bellum Southern scene, are well advised to consult Vernon L. Parrington, *The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800–1860,* Vol. II of *Main Currents in American Thought,* 3 vols. (New York, 1927). The repercussions of proslavery arguments upon fiction are well summarized in Jeanette R. Tandy, "Pro-Slavery Propaganda in American Fiction of the Fifties," in *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Durham, N.C., 1902——), XXI (1922), 41–50, 170–78. What is in effect one of the most ingenious analyses of the late proslavery writers with emphasis on Fitzhugh is developed in Arthur C. Cole, *Lincoln's House-Divided Speech: Did It Reflect a Doctrine of Class Struggle?* (Chicago, 1923). Cole has also developed this theme in his *The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850–1865* (New York, 1934).

Among the essays especially concerned with Fitzhugh's role in proslavery thought are Julian S. Bach, Jr., "The Social Thought of the Old South," in *American Journal of Sociology*

(Chicago, 1896——), XLVI (1941), 179–90, and Wilfred Carsel, "The Slaveholder's Indictment of Northern Wage Slavery," in *Journal of Southern History* (Baton Rouge, 1935——), VI (1940), 504–20. The first professional political theorist to assess Fitzhugh's ideas was Benjamin F. Wright, "George Fitzhugh and the Failure of Liberty," in *Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly,* title varies (Austin, Tex., 1920——), VI (1926), 219–41; he discusses Fitzhugh's rejection of the concept of natural law in *The American Interpretation of Natural Law* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931). The relationship of proslavery literature to early American sociology, with emphasis on Fitzhugh, is summarized in H. G. Duncan and Winnie L. Duncan, "The Development of Sociology in the Old South," in *American Journal of Sociology,* XXXIX (1934), 649–56. This theme is developed from an historian's viewpoint in Harvey Wish, "George Frederick Holmes and the Genesis of American Sociology," *ibid.,* XLVI (1941), 698–707, and "Stephen Pearl Andrews, Pioneer American Sociologist," in *Social Forces* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1922——), XIX (1941), 477–82.

No student of the South can afford to overlook the challenging theories of Avery O. Craven. For Virginia his most useful volume is *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606–1860* (Urbana, Ill., 1926). Professor Craven seeks to present Southern life as reflecting the frontier process with its democratic flavor. He rejects the overemphasis on the allegedly unique mint-julep civilization below Mason and Dixon's line portrayed in neo-abolitionist writings and sees a strong cultural affinity between the ante-bellum South and the Old Northwest. This interpretation is most evident in his articles, "The 'Turner Theories' and the South," in *Journal of Southern History,* V (1939), 291–314, and "John Taylor and Southern Agriculture," *ibid.,* IV (1938), 137–47. A full-length interpretation of the Old South appears in his book, *The Coming of the Civil War* (New York, 1942).

The romantic plantation tradition in the history of Virginia and the South, explained in terms of the seventeenth and eighteenth century English cultural pattern, is thoroughly discussed in William E. Dodd, *The Old South: Struggles for Democracy* (New York, 1937), and, from an interesting biographical point of view, in Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (San Marino, Calif., 1940). Also, more general in scope, is Francis P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Develop-*

ment and the Accuracy of a Tradition (New York, 1924). Dodd's little volume, *The Cotton Kingdom* (New Haven, 1919), is a masterpiece of condensation, portraying the South as a cultural unit and recognizing the role of Fitzhugh and his proslavery contemporaries in creating a new Southern stereotype. Another useful cultural study is by Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1932). The ante-bellum culmination of the process of Southern cultural nationalism is very well described in Jay B. Hubbell, "Literary Nationalism in the Old South," in David K. Jackson (ed.), *American Studies in Honor of William Kenneth Boyd* (Durham, N.C., 1940), 175–220. The decline of the liberal Jeffersonian tradition in the South during the early nineteenth century is ingeniously dealt with in Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (Durham, N.C., 1940).

From an economic viewpoint, the pioneer works of Ulrich B. Phillips are still indispensable, particularly his *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston, 1929), which gives considerable attention to the Virginia scene, and his *American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1918). For the formative seventeenth century influences, the standard work is still Philip A. Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York, 1907). A vivid picture of Virginia's slave-trading interest, as revealed in the career of a major business firm, appears in Wendell H. Stephenson's scholarly *Isaac Franklin, Slave Trader and Planter of the Old South* (University, La., 1938). More militant in tone is Frederic Bancroft, *Slave-Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore, 1931). The economic basis of Southern ante-bellum politics is thoroughly discussed in Robert R. Russel, *Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism, 1840–1861* (Urbana, Ill., 1924). Less satisfactory but still useful for this purpose is Robert S. Cotterill, *The Old South* (Glendale, Calif., 1936).

The political studies for ante-bellum Virginia and the South are numerous and are discussed in large part by many of the works already mentioned. Among the most useful works not included are Jesse T. Carpenter, *The South as a Conscious Minority, 1789–1861* (New York, 1930); Charles H. Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861* (Chicago, 1910); Henry T. Shanks, *The Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847–1861* (Richmond, 1934); John H. Russell, *The Free Negro in Virginia, 1619–1865* (Baltimore, 1913); James C. Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia* (Baltimore, 1902); Beverly B. Mun-

ford, *Virginia's Attitude toward Slavery and Secession* (London, 1909); and James C. McGregor, *The Disruption of Virginia* (New York, 1922). An interpretative and informative study of Civil War origins appears in Ulrich B. Phillips, *The Course of the South to Secession: An Interpretation,* edited by E. Merton Coulter (New York, 1939). Somewhat contrasting interpretations appear in Dwight L. Dumond, *Antislavery Origins of the Civil War in the United States* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1939), and in Arthur Y. Lloyd, *The Slavery Controversy, 1831–1860* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1939). Lloyd gives considerable attention to Fitzhugh's propaganda.

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